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"THE SUBALTERN WISHED HIM *BON VOYAGE* AND SHOOK HANDS"

TALES OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

HENRY NEWBOLT

AUTHOR OF 'ADMIRALS ALL,' 'THE ISLAND RACE,' 'THE YEAR OF TRAFALGAR,' ETC.

WITH SEVEN COLOURED PLATES
AND THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS IN BLACK AND WHITE BY
NORMAN WILKINSON AND CHRISTOPHER CLARK

FIFTH IMPRESSION

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INTRODUCTION

A LETTER TO A BOY

My Dear G.,—I have written this book and you are going to read it—we are partners and must play up to each other. Let me tell you my idea of how it should be done. My part is to give you the truth, the actual facts, well evidenced and clearly arranged. Your part is to read them in such a way as to understand them—that is, to understand not only what happened, but how heroic and how admirable are the qualities which lie behind. You will see, as you read, why I ask you to play up and do your part. It is because I cannot do it for you. I have told you here of good work and courage and endurance, such as deserve all the loudest adjectives that I could have shouted at you; but I have not shouted, and I have used as few adjectives as possible. It is you, not I, that must make the stories come alive. You will not, I hope, imagine that I have written coldly; no!—but the hotter I got myself the more keenly I wished you to be kindled by your own feelings, and not by my words. If you find yourself glorying in these records as I do, come and tell me so when the War is over, and we will get a little music and make a noise together.

Feeling, then, is your part; truth is mine. I believe

you may take this book to be as accurate as anything yet written. I say that boldly, because the truth of the stories depends not on my word but on the word of those who have helped me. First, I have tried, as in the 'Book of the Blue Sea,' and the 'Book of the Thin Red Line,' to tell the stories as far as possible in the words of the actors themselves. But further, I have been able this time, as the events are recent, to lay my sketches before those who appear in them. Two great Admirals, one great General, and several junior officers, have read my manuscript and made corrections and additions of the utmost importance.[1] I need hardly tell you that, with such evidence at my disposal, I have not invented one word of the book. Even when I have ventured to comment or praise, I have followed the opinions expressed by eye-witnesses.

One more point. You may wish that I had given you more stories of the kind sometimes labelled 'Deeds of Daring.' But those you can read in the *Gazette* or *The Times*; and it is of no use for me to tell them over again, because nothing can be added to such deeds, and no good account of them can be got from those who did them. When one of the finest fighters in this War was asked how he felt while winning his V.C. he is said to have replied, 'I didn't feel at all and there's nothing to tell—it was all over in a flash.' Another said 'I felt in a damned funk, but it was soon over.' The fact is that these moments of impulse are wonderful but almost insensible—they cannot be expanded or described. We do well to admire all examples of good

[1] Also the materials for the chapter on the "War in the Air" have been mostly found for me by Mr. L. Blin Desbleds, the Director of the Aeronautical Institute of Great Britain, to whom I tender my sincere thanks.

fighting, but perhaps it is a mistake to separate them into different classes and make more of one kind than another. They all reveal character; and the really important thing is what a man is, not what he does. He is not a hero because he does a fine thing; he does the fine thing because he is a hero, because he has trained himself to go on when all hell tells him to go back. And the fine thing is often not the showy thing, but just the steadiness that comes of long self-discipline. Ask any general what it is that helps an army most at the pinch. Ask any captain what it is that saves the ship when the enemy's salvoes find the target first.

Now if it be true, as I believe, that hardly anything in life is so strengthening as admiration, it is important for us to admire all that is admirable. There is not one deed on the V.C. roll that is not worthy of our admiration; but let us admire no less those who in the hour of greatest need just 'carried on,' or 'held the line,' when they could do no more. For, after all, the object of war is not glory but victory, and victory is won not so much by sudden acts of bravery as by carrying on or by holding out. If you agree with me about this, you will admire what I admire. You will envy and long to imitate not only triumphant champions like Mike O'Leary, but those who, as my stories will show you, could take punishment without breaking, and hold on after they were beaten, keeping command of themselves and others till defeat turned to victory. They are the men who have saved us in this War. And you cannot be cold about them, if once you understand. Is it great moments that you want? Think then of the moment when the Australian boys began to feel the *Emden's* shot: when Sturdee sighted the

Gneisenau: when Beatty saw the *Queen Mary* sunk with all her men: the lonely moment of the night when Smith-Dorrien decided to stand and fight, against all odds and orders: the not less lonely moment when my Subaltern saw his last fellow officer go down under the shrapnel. Above all, if you love the purest heroism, remember the men of the *Monmouth*, cheering the ship that was to escape while they went under; and the four wrecked men of the *Invincible*, forgetting that they were left to their fate, in their joy at seeing their Admiral sweep past them into action. If you feel about these men as I hope you will, you will agree with me that the only way to tell of them is the plain way, without embroidery. The way to read of them—well, as I have said, that is your business.

Yours ever,

HENRY NEWBOLT.

August 1916.

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THE TOY BAND.

A SONG OF THE GREAT RETREAT.

Dreary lay the long road, dreary lay the town,
Lights out and never a glint o' moon:
Weary lay the stragglers, half a thousand down,
Sad sighed the weary big Dragoon.
"Oh! if I'd a drum here to make them take the road again,
Oh! if I'd a fife to wheedle Come, boys, come!
You that mean to fight it out, wake and take your load again,
Fall in! Fall in! Follow the fife and drum!

"Hey, but here's a toy shop, here's a drum for me,
Penny whistles too to play the tune!
Half a thousand dead men soon shall hear and see
We're a band!" said the weary big Dragoon.
"Rubadub! Rubadub! Wake and take the road again,
Wheedle-deedle-deedle-dee, Come, boys, come!
You that mean to fight it out, wake and take your load again,
Fall in! Fall in! Follow the fife and drum!"

Cheerly goes the dark road, cheerly goes the night,
Cheerly goes the blood to keep the beat:
Half a thousand dead men marching on to fight
With a little penny drum to lift their feet.
Rubadub! Rubadub! Wake and take the road again,
Wheedle-deedle-deedle-dee, Come, boys, come!
You that mean to fight it out, wake and take your load again,
Fall in! Fall in! Follow the fife and drum!

As long as there's an Englishman to ask a tale of me,
As long as I can tell the tale aright,
We'll not forget the penny whistle's wheedle-deedle-dee
And the big Dragoon a-beating down the night,
Rubadub! Rubadub! Wake and take the road again,
Wheedle-deedle-deedle-dee, Come, boys, come!
You that mean to fight it out, wake and take your load again,
Fall in! Fall in! Follow the fife and drum!

TALES OF THE GREAT WAR

THE ADVENTURES OF A SUBALTERN

1. The Beginning of the Great War

The Subaltern, as I shall call him in this story, was born in 1893. At school, music and football were his strong points, though he had wits enough to get into the sixth form and edit the school magazine. In October 1911, he went up to Oxford and joined the O.T.C., which he had never before found time to do. He continued to play football, captained his College team, and won the Cup Ties. Some writers think that this kind of thing has little to do with soldiering, but I have heard Commanding Officers say that the useful new subalterns in this war have mostly come from the Public Schools and Universities, and many of the best of them have been those who were accustomed to leading in games. The Oxford Command had already taken this line, and in 1913 the Subaltern received his commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the O.T.C.

In July 1914, he was at home in the country, entertaining some Oxford friends. On Wednesday 29th, they were playing lawn tennis as usual. On the 30th, the war panic broke over Europe, and the party separated. On the 31st, martial law was reported in Germany.

On August 1, the Kaiser declared war on Russia; on the 2nd, he delivered an ultimatum to Belgium; on the 3rd, he declared war on France. In London there was great anxiety lest the Government should be tempted to stand aside and leave our friends to their fate. In the country there was less of this; no one doubted that the time had come for war, but in the quiet old house under the Downs where the Subaltern ate his four meals that day, and smoked in the familiar wicker chairs under the shade of the big elm, it was very hard to realise that the world, as he had known it all his life, was in the act of toppling down like a house of cards. When he went to sleep that night he was still, in spite of the news, an undergraduate reading History for the Final Schools, with a more distant outlook towards the Civil Service Examination.

Next morning, everything was changed. Soon after breakfast came an official telegram, announcing the general mobilisation order, and telling him to report himself immediately at the Oxford depot. His mother was away from home. He packed up, lunched, said good-bye to his sister, whose husband was also on his way to join his regiment, and drove off with his father to the neighbouring town. There all was in a quiet cheerful stir. In the Cathedral Close two battalions of Territorials were lying among their piled arms. They made a curiously picturesque scene; their khaki blended exactly with the brownish green of the turf and the brownish grey of the Cathedral. From the Deanery and the Canons' houses, maids in white caps and aprons were bringing out tea to the thirsty men on the grass.

At the station there were more troops lying in the roadway, and the station yard was full of cars and trans-

port wagons. Soon after four o'clock a train arrived from the West. The Subaltern's godmother happened to be arriving by it: he took her place in the carriage, and said good-bye to her and to his father in a strangely ordinary fashion—it was all as natural as a dream.

Late that night England declared war on Germany.

The Subaltern's first job was a dull one; for about a fortnight he had to sit in an office in Oxford with a number of other officers, all dons, as a Board for nominating undergraduates for commissions in the Territorials or Special Reserve. It was supposed then that the Territorials would only be used for home defence; so the Subaltern himself applied for Special Reserve, which was more difficult to get. He wrote home, 'I decided to do this, of course, rather than apply only for a transference in the Territorials, in which case I should certainly not leave the country. It is, as far as I can gather, a sort of privilege that I get, from my present position in the O.T.C., that I can become a Special Reservist liable to go out, whereas an ordinary member of the O.T.C. (private or N.C.O.) can (except for a very few exceptions) only take a commission in the Territorials and not leave the country.' He was rather jealous of his brother-in-law, who was a captain in King Edward's Horse, and seemed certain of getting out sooner or later.

The office work became so wearisome that he soon wrote 'to get any regiment will be quite a rest,' and it was a relief when, on August 21, he was gazetted to the 3rd Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He might well be pleased at the prospect of going to one of the most famous regiments in the army, and he had the additional satisfaction of

going in company with his own captain and particular friend, J. L. J., who was gazetted at the same time. They were both inoculated for enteric, and before the end of the month they were in camp at Purbrook, near Cosham. The Subaltern's work there was to drill and instruct recruits, and he was well qualified for it; for he had done his course of training with the Grenadier Guards at Chelsea only six months before.

Meantime, the battles of Mons and Le Cateau had been fought, the Great Retreat had come to an end, and on the Marne the tide was turning towards victory. The losses were very heavy. Among the killed were several of the Subaltern's friends and schoolfellows. But, like all his generation, he felt that they had died a good death, and he thought only of filling the gaps. 'We sent off another draft yesterday,' he wrote on September 12, 'two officers and 160 men. This brings me quite excitingly near my turn to go, which is more than satisfactory. If they send three more drafts at the present rate of one a week, I might get a place in the third. Meanwhile, we are very cheery and chirpy about the war, and still believe in the Russians.' The Russians he believed in were, of course, 'the Archangels,' the phantom army which was said to have come round from Archangel to Leith, and to be daily training through England on the way to Belgium.

A fortnight later, he was becoming impatient. 'It is rather sickening to hear that several men, who never even belonged to the O.T.C. at Oxford, have just sailed —some in the Royal Scots, some in the King's Own Scottish Borderers. But I think and hope we are doing useful work training these recruits here. . . I lectured for three hours yesterday to batch after batch,

besides any amount of drill.' But something a little more exciting was in store for him. A German submarine had been seen several times off the neighbouring coast and was believed to be in communication with someone on a certain island there. The island has long ago been turned into an armed camp, so that there can be no harm now in speaking of it. 'Evidently,' the Subaltern wrote, 'the submarine was somehow managing to get watered and fed; also there were reports of unnatural lights on the island at night, and it was believed that some sort of signalling was going on; also the Admiralty were convinced there was a leakage somewhere in the wires.'

Accordingly, on November 1, he received orders to take an orderly and patrol the coast line of the island for a whole night. He got leave to take a fellow-subaltern—his old Oxford captain, J. L. J.—instead of an orderly, and the two started out at dusk. They scouted as far as the last houses and then lay low until 10 o'clock P.M., when the inhabitants went to bed. After that 'the whole thing became really romantic and very exciting. The moon was nearly full (very difficult from our point of view), the sky rather cloudless, and . . . the searchlight worried us a good deal.' You can imagine them slinking along in silence, like two shadows 'with various (Sherlock) Holmes-and-Watson devices . . . revolver in one pocket, ammunition in another, also maps, knives, strong cord, compass, electric torches, matches, notebooks, etc.' At last they got clear of the houses and the searchlight, 'and were left with hilly sand dunes, heather and the moon. It was wonderfully wild, very windy, and the waves roared on the shingle close by on our right. It was

just like walking into that R. L. S. story—the setting was exactly the same. . . . Then we came to a solitary unlit house, which shewed up pure white, surrounded with an old broken wall and a pit on one side of it.'

There was something suspicious about this deserted house, because the nearest building to it was a new white and red house right on the sea edge, which belonged to a German family. It was now, however, in charge of a single old caretaker. At this point a thick fog came up and made further observation impossible. The patrol returned by a different route, signalled across to a sentry at Ferry Point, and were fetched off in a boat about 4.30 A.M. 'We came into barracks just before early parade at 7 o'clock A.M., which we attended in the usual way; then a hot bath and breakfast and a good sleep.'

On the following night three other subalterns were sent out on the same beat. On the night after that the Subaltern and J. L. J. went again, with two orderlies. 'There were various minor excitements, and "Holmes and Watson" had some fun over some recent footprints in the sand by a boat up the M. Creek.' On November 4, J. L. J. patrolled alone; on the 5th, he went again, and at 10 o'clock P.M. the Subaltern and another officer went to a rendezvous from which they could exchange flash-light signals with him. They returned by the ferry at 5 A.M., and heard from the boatman of an exciting incident. At 11.30 P.M., two men had been seen walking about on the shore of the island. 'When challenged by the sentry exactly opposite, they took no notice. The sentry fetched out the corporal of the post, who duly fired a couple of rounds at the men, all according to orders. The men still

took no notice, so the corporal ordered a volley from his post, which sent the two men scuttling away into the sand-dunes.' The corporal and his superior officer

'The corporal ordered a volley which sent the two men scuttling away into the sand-dunes.'

were not unnaturally relieved, when they saw the two subalterns returning, that *they* were not the two men, 'though,' says the Subaltern, 'they had hardly thought it possible that we should be such fools as not to answer the challenge.'

The mystery of these two men, out on the shore

at midnight, who preferred to stand fire from the corporal and his guard rather than answer, was never solved. 'A search party sent out next morning found no corpses, and no one complained of having been fired at—mark that, Watson!'

But by this time the authorities had read the reports sent in by the patrols, which contained various matters not here mentioned, and had come to the conclusion that the search was worth pursuing further. So, on November 9, the two subalterns went forth again, accompanied by an officer of much higher rank. They made another long night of it and covered some sixteen miles of ground, returning once more by the ferry at 4.30 A.M. The senior officer no doubt made his own report on this occasion, and that closed the adventure as far as the regiment was concerned. The Subaltern described those nights as 'some of the most thrilling experiences I've ever had,' and the last night 'quite kept up the Stevensonian romance of the whole episode.' He was destined, within a few months, to have more thrilling nights than these; but these, too, were a bit of real war, for there can be no doubt that enemy submarines had confederates along our coasts, and the supplies which were life to them meant death to our sailors, and to our women and children too. It is good to know that the Subaltern's own submarine has long been lying at the bottom, a coffin full of dishonoured bones.

2. Going to the Front

During the last ten days of October and the first fortnight of November, while the Subaltern was stalking his submarine, the regiment was hard at it in Flanders,

fighting in one desperate battle after another to keep the Germans from rushing the Channel ports. You will find more about all this in the 'Story of a General.' The details were not fully or correctly reported at the time, but what little news did come home was very inspiring. On November 15, the Subaltern wrote: 'Two of our wounded officers have now come back, and appear sometimes in mufti. Their tales of the 52nd are really wonderful and simply fill one with pride. One realises what it means to be a crack regiment when one hears how, after the 52nd had got up into rough trenches, 400 yards from the German trenches, at the third German counter-attack our men actually held their fire until the enemy were only twenty yards away, masses of them; and not one of our men fired till the order came.'

A few days later came the news of the regiment's great charge on November 11, when they drove back the Prussian Guards who had by sheer weight of numbers broken through our front line. Then, on December 2, came the first list of honours. 'My dear father,' wrote the Subaltern, 'I must have a handshake with you over the D.S.O. list this morning. . . . It is satisfactory to know that Special Reserve fellows can play up well to the regulars, and you see *The Times* to-day is impatient that more young officers are not being sent.' The young officers were impatient too; but they had, some of them, a long time to wait yet.

The Subaltern's next work was a course of field defences—useful but very dull. Then manœuvres, in some of which he and his platoon had to play the part of 'uncivilised enemies,' and be hunted through a wooded country by 'a regular army.' Then came

Christmas, when he got five days' leave home; and after that he was promoted to act as a sort of assistant adjutant, with separate barracks and buglers and police of his own. This was encouraging, but made him still more impatient to be off.

The day came at last very suddenly. On March 16 he wrote home: 'One line before we leave—I'm not sorry to be leaving, I must say! We go at 5 o'clock P.M. —it is now 4.15—in three taxis. We are a cheery crowd and every one is extraordinarily genial here—they suggested that we should march to the station with the band! . . . By the way, three things will arrive from here some time: my tin box—here are its keys—my bed, and a bundle of odd things in a rug. No more now.'

The nine subalterns had an uneventful voyage across to France, and went at once to Rouen, a little uncomfortable at not knowing for certain what orders they would get there. They felt pretty sure that not all of them would be needed by their own regiment, and that some of them therefore must be intended to go elsewhere. To be 'attached' to a regiment not your own may be all right, and generally is so; in any case, a soldier's business is to serve where he is wanted. But, at the first start, everyone naturally prefers his own corps to any other, and in this case the Subaltern was especially anxious to rejoin his friend J. L. J., who had already gone out to the 52nd. So he was a good deal disappointed when he found that of his party of nine, only three, who were regulars, and one Special Reservist, were to go to the regiment, while he and the other three Special Reservists were posted to the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. The only con-

solation was that the four of them were going together, and that their new regiment was one with a reputation of the right kind. It had borne the brunt in the recent German attack on St. Eloi, where it had four trenches blown up and suffered very heavy losses. A reinforcing draft of 114 men was on its way out, and the Subaltern was left behind at Rouen to wait for them and bring them on. He was the second senior officer of the four, and his selection for this duty had the odd result of making him junior to all the other three; for they took rank according to the time at which they actually joined the regiment. But I have noticed that, in this war, most subalterns think little or nothing of their own rank—the work in hand is much too big for that to matter.

The Subaltern, when he arrived, found the battalion at Westoutre taking a rest. He was posted to D Company, and spent his spare time for the next few days in walking about the country behind our lines, with his friend 'Lance,' one of those who had come out with him. On April 2, the regiment was ordered back to the firing line, and next day he wrote the following account of their march and his own first acquaintance with the trenches.

'I'm seizing the opportunity of scribbling a line or two now, because there's something rather satisfactory about writing home "under shell fire." As a matter of fact, that is hardly true, as the shells are a good two hundred yards away at present, but I expect they're trying to find us, and p'raps they will, later on. I'll let you know if they do!

'Now I must tell you about this place and how we got here. We left billets at quarter to three yesterday

morning, in greatcoats and heavily loaded, and marched and marched and marched—really only about ten miles, but it took an immense time, as we were continually "checking," i.e. being held up by troops in front. Eventually we reached that famous and ruined town, of which you wot the name no doubt, at 8 o'clock. It was a lovely sunny morning, and the ruined Cathedral and Cloth Hall were a very fine sight. Some streets are a complete wreck, others still untouched, with a few meagre shops in use. The battalion was put into a sort of school and the officers went off and had a first-class breakfast in a little café, as soon as the men had started theirs. Two Jack Johnsons came into the town, but only hit one man. Two little rooms, one each side of a street, were our temporary quarters, but they were only just big enough to hold all our equipment. Lance and I managed to get an hour's doze in the P.M. Then we had a schoolroom big tea. B Company got orders to go up to the "close support" trenches, i.e. a close second line, with another regiment in the brigade, and the remainder of the battalion got orders to move up into "dug-outs" (as reserve) in the third line.

'We moved off very slowly in the pitchiest black night, accompanied by a misty drizzle. That was 8.30 P.M. Our adventures on the way were many, some rather worrying, others humorous in a grim way. We didn't reach the end of the show till 3 A.M. this morning! Of course the pace was frightfully slow, and we had one long halt out in a bare place, during which I fell asleep and woke up with a start, fairly shivering. The amusing part of it was the incessant jabbering of our French guides, who all wanted to take us different

ways, and all said so at once. Then we had a wonderful incident, each company drawing water and ammunition from the train (wagons). It was pitch dark, as I said before, only blacker still if you can imagine it, and everything seemed in a fearful mess and box-up. Everyone shouted "Who er you? What company? What platoon are yer? Oh! I beg your pardon, sir, I didn't see you," &c., and I helped as much as I could to put people into the right places and—*mirabile dictu!*—we were all back again in fours ready to move off—all in quite a short time. Then we came through a village, shattered all to pieces, and a great shell came screaming over our heads as we went along, and pitched about fifty yards off in a field and never went off! It was a wonderful noise, that shell—the first one I've heard quite close. It was the only one they put into the village (I gather they do it whenever troops are relieving), and it was wonderfully well timed for our arrival, far better than they could have expected, and not so very much too over-shot, but then it didn't burst.

'Then we came to the outskirts of the wood in which we are now, and the men began to lose touch, an inevitable difficulty at night over rough country, and I felt peace-training come to my help later on, when we got inside the wood itself. It was thick undergrowth, and lined with little deep-sunk ditches and streams, and we had to press on, as stray bullets began to whiz past and hit the trees—all high up, but likely to ricochet in any direction. You can hardly imagine the scene, because the wretched men (and officers, by Jove!) were absolutely dog-tired; it was now 2 A.M. and we'd been up at about that time the morning

before. And the boxes of ammunition presented great difficulty—two men lugging along a box at irregular intervals along the line, and others carrying water, and stumbling and falling headlong into shell-holes and ditches, cursing and swearing and sweating. Oh! it was awful, but somehow it made me laugh a lot to myself. We were now about five hundred to six hundred yards from the front trenches and the noise of firing was just like a rifle range—perpetual pop-pop. Fortunately, except for stray bullets, we were under cover the whole way up, though I hear two men in another regiment were killed.

'Then at last we came to our dug-outs. It is simply the world of Peter Pan's family in the underground scene. Little mud huts about half underground and half above—made with pine-wood and mud, scattered about among the trees, some fairly isolated, some close together, all thickly lined with straw, and nearly all showing a thin coil of jolly-smelling smoke coming out of some hole in the roof. Can you imagine anything more utterly romantic? I felt exactly as if I was taking part in one of those cheap romantic novels, where English adventurers and native tribes live in just such huts, and listen to the crack of bullets. The native tribes' part of it was supplied by the odd-looking French troops which we were relieving.

'After all the men had crawled in, we five subalterns of D Company found ourselves a dug-out. I should so love you to see it. It has a sloping roof of pine boughs, which catches one's head at the highest part, so one is always stooping. There is a table and we have two chairs, and an enormous bed of straw about a foot from the ground. There is very little room

to move about in, and we sleep packed like sardines, but it is fairly warm, and after dark we are allowed to make a fire and shall get a hot meal. Hurrah! They've stopped shelling and never found us. Firing goes on just as at night, single shots all the time. It seems most ridiculous, especially at night, but I suppose it is the only way of preventing working parties on the wire outside the trenches.

'That's all we know at present. We have to be ready to move at a moment's notice, day and night, when we should crawl up a communication trench into the close support &c. I got some lovely chocolate from ——,—please thank her—and your letter of the 29th, thank you. This must be all now.'

3. In the Trenches

The Great War took us by surprise in many ways; perhaps one of the things we least expected was that, after the first attack and repulse, fighting in trenches would entirely take the place of manœuvring in open country. We had forgotten the history of our old wars, in which trenches, mines and countermines, bombs and hand grenades were all quite common methods of fighting. There is, of course, a difference. In this war the trenches have probably cost us far more in endurance and in losses than we suffered in any previous campaign; the numbers engaged have been much greater, the 'position-warfare' has lasted longer and the conditions have been more trying. In the Peninsula the trenches were often wet and cold—one winter 'a pair of iced breeches' was the daily portion of every man in them—but they needed so few men that they were manned in short shifts of only

twenty-four hours each; and there were then no machine-guns, no high explosives, and no aeroplanes. There were some months at the beginning of 1915 when the armies in Flanders suffered the extreme of misery—in the small British force alone the casualties from frost-bite ran up to nearly ten thousand—and it was said by the head of one of the Red Cross departments that in her view there was only one way of classifying men; there were those who had been in the trenches and those who had not.

She would have 'passed' the Subaltern, for he happened to go out to the wettest point of the whole line—that south of Ypres—and he arrived just in time to experience the cold and mud before the ground dried. Moreover, though they were not there long, the Cornwalls were disappointed of their relief again and again, owing to the weakness of the reserves at that time; and it is hard to exaggerate the tenacity needed to stand the strain of prolonged misery, sleeplessness and danger combined. One of our Army Commanders, wishing to get a true estimate of this, consulted a regimental officer whose opinion he could rely upon. 'Knowing him to be an exceptionally brave man and one who had won the confidence of his men to a very remarkable extent, I asked him whether the strain of constantly fighting in the trenches was not very great. He told me that it was very great indeed, and that there were times when he thought he would be unable to stand it, and that he was very glad to have a rest.' That will help you to understand the following letters from the Subaltern.

'9/4/15.—I've just done three days and four nights in the trenches and am now in close support again,

just behind, and no time to write and tell you all about it yet. It was a wonderful episode and I thought we should all die of strain and exhaustion at several moments, but somehow we didn't. We expect two more days of it either to-morrow or next day, and then, pray God, a good rest. I've averaged three hours' sleep in forty so far, but am expecting a decent night now. I'll write and tell you as much as I can about it all as soon as we go back. I very nearly got frost-bitten feet or rather sodden feet, but they have recovered to-day—much better. Parts of the trench were standing in water. . . .

'P.S.—Will you send as soon as possible one of those little egg-shaped perforated tins for holding tea-leaves in boiling water.'

'10/4/15.— . . . Well, I can't describe every detail of one's experiences. It takes such a long time getting along from one end of one's trench to the other that one has to rely a lot on one's sergeants. They tell off the reliefs for each loophole. My job chiefly was to see (all the time) to the supply of ammunition and its correct expenditure (which latter rested on my judgment only) and also to the supply of rations, &c. —oh, many other little things! The strain comes in owing to the fact that during our period of occupation I am entirely responsible for all that goes on—or may go on—inside and in front of my piece of trench. Mine was a funny winding piece, about fifty yards long, rather short of loopholes and pretty wet.

'During the day I had one man in six on "look-out"—taking an occasional peep through a loophole—while the others slept in tiny dug-outs in the inner wall, and some had to fetch rations and others wood

and sand-bags, &c. At dark we stood to arms, every man at his post, with fixed bayonets—for about an hour. Then I had two men in six on duty at the loop-holes. They poke their rifles through and leave them resting there and take an occasional blind shot at the

'An occasional peep through a loophole.'

enemy's parapet—to prevent him from working on it or out in front. During the day, the one man in six takes an occasional snipe at anything he can see moving, or knocks down any loose sand-bag he can spot.

'I had the men divided in sections of 6 under an N.C.O.

'At night we built up again with new sand-bags any holes the Germans had made during the day,

and improved our loopholes. But there was never very much to do. As there were very few loopholes, about two-thirds of the men in the event of an attack, &c., would have to get up and fire over the top of the parapet; so we made stands for them to do this from.

'It is an order in this regiment that no officer may be in a dug-out during the night; so I spent my time wandering up and down the line, seeing that all was correct. During the day I snatched a wee nap in a dug-out just behind, in a communication trench, but I was wanted before I'd had a quarter of an hour, and I got no more. The second night was the worst. We were all very tired and short of sleep before we went into the trenches (we'd been up all night both nights before) and this was the fourth night for me without a sleep, though I had some on Easter P.M. I don't think I've ever felt so miserable myself as during the long hours of that night (Tuesday). I went up and down, staggering along and slipping about, flashing my electric torch into the faces of my men, who woke up with a start and said, "All right, sir, I'm awake," and then snored again as soon as I passed on. Poor devils, they were done to the world. I fell off twice myself as I was walking along and started with a jerk as I found myself leaning against the parapet right in front of a loophole. The next day and night (Wednesday) were not quite so bad somehow. We all seemed to have got a second wind. But Thursday the day was the longest that ever was, even though I got over an hour's sleep.

'The firing is incessant, but only very occasionally becomes rapid and then just for a few moments only, when perhaps a machine gun (in the trenches) is turned

on to knock down part of the parapet. The uncanny part of it was the extreme nearness of the trenches. They were about twenty, twenty-five to thirty yards in front of me. In my piece, No. 19, there were as many as four "listening posts." These are deep tunnels going out under our parapet about fifteen yards (neither side uses grenades or bombs here unless the other does) towards the enemy, and I had men listening at the far end day and night for any sounds of tapping or digging. There were a few sappers about, but not nearly as many as one would have liked. I talked to one of their officers, who told me that by a system of underground sapping which they were now putting into practice and which he showed me (as I will show you some day) it was almost—he said "quite"—impossible for the Germans to mine us without being discovered. But we all felt a bit nervous about mines and saps, especially in Lance's trench, next but one to mine, where the two parapets stood only eight yards apart, and both sides maintained a deathly silence day and night! On Thursday P.M., about an hour before we were relieved by another regiment, I was detailed to take a party to fetch rations from the dumping ground about two miles back, where our transport comes up every night with rations, and then bring them and a new draft, which I was to pick up there, along to our original reserve dug-outs. This was all successfully carried out, though we had a nasty shock near the dumping ground.

'The Germans had evidently discovered exactly where it was, and just as we were arriving at the spot, on the side of a road, a shell burst twenty yards away on the other side of the hedge. Thank God, it was one of

those lyddite things, which merely burst on contact and spit iron and earth all round; for had it been shrapnel we should certainly all have been hit. As it was, we had time to crouch or lie down before the thing burst like thunder and splashed all over us. I remember distinctly thinking how odd it was that there was so much time between the moment that we knew we were in for it and the moment when it actually burst. You see we heard it coming, whistling along, very loud, and I heard some men near me saying, "I bet that's coming for us," and such remarks.

'We had no casualties, which was very lucky, as I went back afterwards and found its hole only twenty yards away. The men were all so frightfully worn-out with fatigue that it made us all very nervy and unhappy for a bit. It took about half an hour to collect all the men afterwards from ditches and ruined houses — we were about forty men strong.

'Then all went well. I got the rations and found the draft, and also Captain U., one of our (Oxf. and Bucks Light Infantry) captains, who shared exactly our fate when he came out about a fortnight after us. Now he is actually Officer Commanding D Company, 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and I am one of his subalterns in this company! It is good to have someone in command of the company at last. We really had no one before.

'To carry on. We all got to the reserve (*demi-repos*) place some time that night or nearly next A.M., the whole battalion except B Company, which remained in the trenches; and of course we expected a decent rest of at least two days (we'd been told we should get that much). We slept till about mid-day—the most

blessed sleep on straw, in our original dug-out—on Friday this is—and then I had a most refreshing wash, and shaved off a long beard—when suddenly orders to move off again, A and C Companies to new trenches just a bit further along from where we were before, and D Company (I was lucky, by Jove !) to new dug-outs in close support. So here I am on Saturday P.M., expecting at any moment that D Company will go up to the trenches to relieve one of our companies there (probably B, who have been there longer than any other). Shells are bursting pretty near — trying to find a battery of ours which shelled them this morning. A corporal of ours was grazed a minute ago getting water, but I don't think they've found us really ; I think they are after that battery.

'Lance has become machine-gun officer, which pleases him, I expect, though I am very sorry, as he leaves the company and I shan't see much of him. . . .

'Please send the cousins many thanks for their capital tin of shortbreads and peppermint creams (hand-made)—I could do with some more of them. And thank you ever so much for the glorious jaeger scarf and helmet, which are nicer than anything of the kind I've ever seen, or rather felt. They came yesterday, and I just wish you could see me in my fur coat and helmet, a complete Peter Pan boy under the ground.

'This is all I can write now (though I am not really too tired now).'

'12/4/15.—I don't think I have any more personal news to give you since I wrote last. Oh, yes ! General —— —— came round with our Brigadier this morning, just to say good morning to us. He seemed a very nice jovial gentleman, and made us laugh, when he

carried his big body, evidently more quickly than he's accustomed to do, across the drive by our dug-out, which is supposed to be a favourite target of German snipers!

'P.M.—Some silly young idiots of ours started a fire in the wood before it was really dark, and it was extraordinary how soon the German artillery picked up the smoke. They were dropping shells round us within a minute, and they stopped—which seemed inconsequent to me—as soon as ever we got the fire out.

'The country is pretty and we've had no rain for three or four days; so things have been pleasant enough but for snipers and stray bullets, which come very close every now and then. Isn't it incredible that German snipers can manage to get over their own trenches and over ours, and support themselves in the woods behind our lines and hit our men in the back? A small party of ours went out the other day after a particularly tiresome fellow and caught him alive. He was a boy of fifteen or sixteen, they said, and had been worrying our supports for some days, killing one and wounding four.

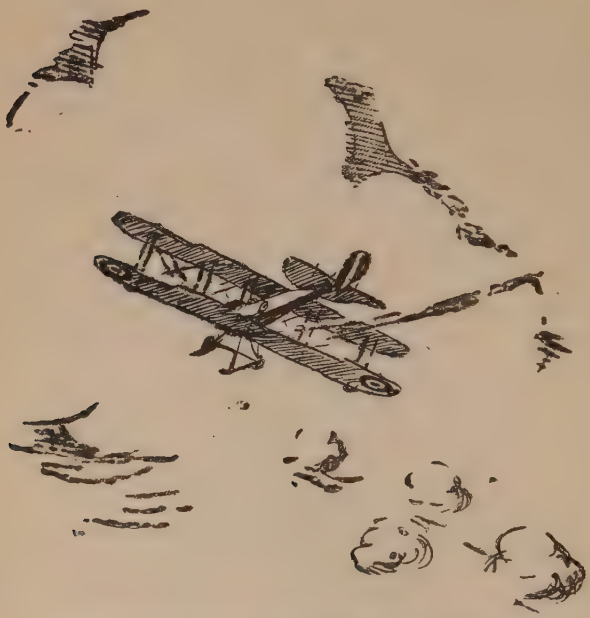
'We caught a message over the telephone line after that, from another regiment in the brigade, saying, "Well done, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Noted in game-bag!"

'The line in front is very quiet to-day, and I believe some sort of show is expected to-night. It is all so absurdly like a schoolboy's game, in which the main idea is tit for tat and a bit more if you can do it. I've noticed that many of our few casualties during these days have been due to sheer folly on the part of individuals; but to be sniped is very rotten luck.

'I can distinguish now between the French 75's

noise and that of our guns. The Germans' is slightly different, and one can always tell which way the shells are travelling in the air.

'The Germans' lyddite shells seem to travel absurdly



'The aeroplane goes on its way, singing like a lark.'

slowly—as I told you before in the case of that one which nearly did for us at the dumping ground. Shelling aeroplanes is quite a different sound again. The difference between it and ordinary shelling is much the same as the difference between a muffled and ordinary drum.

'The French 75 is the jolliest gun of all. It fires

almost as rapidly as a maxim, and with a fine short bang. It is a most encouraging noise. They've used them a lot in the woods behind us.

'It is very amusing to watch a German shrapnel trying to hit a British aeroplane. First the muffled report, then a little puff of white-grey smoke, invariably some way short of its mark; and the aeroplane goes on its way, singing like a lark. I've seen this happening several times.

'I've also heard several shells come over from the Germans to-day, which have certainly never burst, and I've never heard any of ours fail—which is an Irish sort of remark, but you know what I mean!

'Now some food and then some sleep—my men's rifles were good to-day.'

4. Next Door to Hill 60

The Subaltern's next spell of trenches came much sooner than was expected; reserves were not plentiful, and troops which had already got their hand in could not be sent far back or allowed time for 'resting.' By April 15, the Cornwalls were again in the front line, but this time in a more interesting and rather less uncomfortable place. I call it interesting because it was so different from what one would have expected, and in fact it fairly puzzled some of its defenders, as you will see. Being part of a line which ran, roughly speaking, north and south, they might naturally have expected to have the enemy on the east, and facing them, whereas some at least were to the south, and had their backs turned to the trenches held by the Cornwalls. The explanation of this is that the regiment was now in a place that did not run north and south

at all. They were at the lower bend of the big bulge or salient, which at this time ran far out in front of Ypres. You can trace it on the map by drawing a line from Steenstraate on the Yser canal, north of Ypres, round Langemark, Broodseinde and Veldhoek and then back between Zillebeke and Klein Zillebeke to the canal again, passing just behind Hill 60. This long bulging line had been mainly held by the French, but we were now daily taking over more and more of it from them, beginning from the south. The part which the Cornwalls were now to hold was within eight hundred yards of Hill 60, and faced about S.S.E., the hill being on their right, and the German trenches behind the hill lying actually south and even south-west of them. You will see how the Subaltern puzzled this out by degrees.

'17/4/15. 9.30 A.M.—I'm sitting on a couple of ammunition boxes outside my little dug-out—dozing dreamily in baking sunshine. In front of me is my own parapet of sandbags about 6 feet high, and t'other side of that the ground shelves down gradually to the Germans' parapet of sandbags about 60 yards away. The country between and all round is a mass of tree-stumps, all bright-coloured splinters and chips, and the ground a rather bright-coloured yellow sand. Behind me (20 yards) is another line of sandbags, which is supposed to be the next trench on my left. As a matter of fact more than half of it is directly behind my trench and the other half of it extends away to the left rear. Twenty yards to my immediate left, my own trench comes to an abrupt end. Twenty yards to my immediate right, my trench bends back at a right angle till it runs into the beginning of the trench which,

as I've said, is supposed to be the next trench on my left. Four hundred yards right away to my direct right there is a communication trench partly covered over with sandbags: this belongs to the Germans. And straight beyond this trench and running across it at nearly right angles is another German trench 500 yards from me, raised up on a slight hill, so that from where I am now, I see first the German communication trench at 400, and above it this other German trench at 500. This other trench is a fire trench, and what I am looking at is the back of it! Can you believe all this possible!!! Not more than 1000 yards away to my left rear there are German fire trenches again, as the line curves back there.

'I think it is the most incredible position that ever existed, and I'm sure it'll interest you immensely. One of the odd things about it is, that the people who occupied it before we came never realised the oddity, as I was never told of the absurdity of the German position (and my own for the matter of that) on my right. When I came in, of course the first thing I did was to build up and strengthen the two ends of my trench. Then I made a loophole, from which every now and then I go and snipe Germans along that 400–500 line. But to-day there are very few to be seen, and then only for half a second. Part of the line seems to have been (very naturally) abandoned, probably some time ago. And another part is so thickly wooded that one sees very little really indeed. Which partly accounts for the fact that, so far, I've only hit two Germans up there. The most extraordinary thing, as you'll be thinking, is that they can enfilade the whole of my trench, and that I look at the back of their

trench. The oddity of this is only equalled by the fact that no one shoots at my trench at all, as far as I can see. The trench immediately to my front is supposed to be a German front line (fire) trench, and I suppose only three shots have come over me from there in the last thirty hours, and I can see no loopholes. Therefore, I personally believe it to be only a communication trench.

'Consequently, here I am sitting dozing in the sunshine, on my two ammunition boxes outside my little dug-out, trying to explain it all to you.

'Well, it is all so odd that I could go on all the morning thinking and writing about it; but I really meant to write to thank you all for many messages, and letters, and parcels, and good things. I liked getting your letter of the 12th so much; it gave me a jolly feeling of being momentarily in your room again, upstairs.

'Thank you so much for your choice parcel, which came this morning. Cigarettes, tobacco (I've heaps of baccy now to go on with, thank you), and chocolate were all most welcome. I breakfasted almost entirely on chocolate this morning—as I didn't want to leave my trench in search of other food, and besides the chocolate looked, and was, so good.

'We had quite a decent sort of rest in those reserve dug-outs, really, and came into the trenches again on Thursday night, quite well and hearty. Some sort of movement on the part of the Germans was expected both Thursday night and last night, so we kept very wide-awake—but nothing happened, and all is still absurdly calm and peaceful. The only apparent danger in this apparently very dangerous and isolated trench

of mine is from chance bullets coming over from my left rear. We have had no casualties in this trench, so far, but in the one behind me they have two or three shot in the back from such stray bullets coming over; and there have been just such casualties in this trench last week. It is rumoured, and we hope it is true this time, that we are relieved on Sunday night and then go back to town for at any rate three or four days. That should be a proper rest, but there were one hundred casualties in that town in one morning the other day, from a sudden outburst of Jack Johnsons! So it doesn't sound too safe a place for a rest!

'I wear a fine pair of French gum shoes over my boots, and now have warm, dry feet.'

The Subaltern, you see, was beginning to find war quite interesting and not all unendurable. It was at this moment that he wrote to condole with his sister on having to say good-bye to her husband, who was just coming out. He added, 'But I bet he's as happy as a bird.'

Harder times were coming for everybody; both we and the enemy were secretly preparing to attack each other at different points. The English attack was to be made on Hill 60. This was a small bit of slightly raised ground near the railway, not worth calling a hill, but very important for all that. As long as the enemy held it they could overlook our lines and we could see nothing of theirs: they used it as an artillery observation post, and had fortified it very strongly. It was only just outside our trenches, and it would be a great gain if we could include it in our line.

So for six weeks past one of our Mining Companies

had been burrowing under it: they had prepared six mines, each containing a ton of explosive. As soon as these had been fired, the 13th Brigade, headed by the West Kents and the K.O.S.B., were to rush forward, and the guns were to put a curtain of shell fire just beyond the Hill, to stop the Germans from reinforcing. This all came off on the 17th and was a complete success: two German officers and fifteen men were captured, the whole of the rest being blown sky high. Desperate counter-attacks followed, and for four days the Hill was thickly heaped with dead. After suffering many defeats and very heavy losses the Germans retook most of the Hill on May 6; but the Subaltern knew nothing of that, as you will see. What he heard and saw of the attack is told in the following letter.

'19/4/15.—Here I am still sitting on my ammunition boxes two mornings after I wrote last. We've had some excitements since then. Strange that it should have come after such a peaceful morning as that was; in the afternoon we had some nasty shelling. I was out of my trench—at tea time—just waiting to have my tea round at Company Headquarters in a dug-out behind, when shrapnel began to burst at intervals of about half a minute. It began about 40 yards away in the wood, where it is still standing thick behind, and gradually swept round right after us—one right over our dug-out there, spattering stuff about and knocking down a cup in the doorway—then it found our trenches. Two or three burst over the trench on the right of mine, as I hurried along to reach my own; there I found all the men ready "standing to arms," but all as a matter of fact cowering (correctly

of course) down at the bottom of the trench. My equipment was on and everything packed in a jiffy; it seemed not unlikely that there might be an attack or some movement about to come off in front. A sudden burst of shrapnel over the trenches is the usual curtain-raiser to an attack. So we all kept down, waiting, except for the usual few on "look-out," who bobbed their heads over the parapet every now and then for a peep. Then the shrapnel passed over our trench. But fortunately it didn't burst over it; the nearest shell burst about 12 yards to one side, so that by keeping down we were all right, and thank God I had no casualties at all. In the next trench on my right one man was killed and two wounded. It was perfectly horrid at the time, though looking back on it now makes it seem less alarming than it certainly was at the time. And that was not to end our excitements. There was no attack, or anything done anywhere in front; but a little later on we got orders about a big show on our part in the Brigade on our right, well within sound, but out of sight. At a given time we blew up one of their trenches over there and then rushed the position and occupied quite a good piece of their line. All this, perhaps, you'll see, or rather will have seen, in the papers. Even to us the thing was like an earthquake, and smoke and dust went up ever so high; then there was half an hour's heavy firing, and all quieted down again, except for batteries upon batteries of guns. These, which seemed to be chiefly our guns, went on firing away all that evening and most of the night, so that the whole sky-line was continually flaring up, and the noise was tremendous. It makes every one a bit

jumpy, and we didn't have much of a night. Early in the morning the Germans made a counter-attack, in which a good deal of fierce hand-to-hand fighting

'Then rushed the position and occupied a good piece of their line.'

was reported, but we held on to the captured position and our guns kept shelling their supports for hours. Then things became normal again till the afternoon, when we were informed "repetition of yesterday, P.M., on the right."

'We heard no blowing-up of any trench, but this morning it was reported that we'd carried another

position at the third attempt, with bayonets, and had suffered pretty enormous casualties.

'There is a rumour of still more doings again to-night, and as long as anything is going on so near, of course we cannot get relieved. We were to have gone yesterday P.M., and now we are supposed to be going to-night. But one can't tell. There is still excitement in the air in the shape of shells screaming about in quite ten different directions. When I began this letter a French aeroplane dropped a smoke-streamer over the Germans' lines, and now we've got a gun dropping shells over in that direction. The aeroplanes are very wonderful. There were six of ours and two of theirs hovering about yesterday P.M. during the fighting, and I found my glasses useful. I've not managed to discover very much more about the odd position of my trench, but I've a notion now that the cross trench up on the sky-line, where I snipe, is a German communication trench behind their fire trench, and not the *back* of their fire trench, and that our line and theirs bends round again. But the whole thing is very odd, and it's extraordinary how little interest in it the authorities seem to take!

'It is another glorious hot morning, and I loved getting your letter of 15th at 5 A.M. Everything is very quiet and I am looking forward to a sleep now, as soon as my sergeant wakes up and relieves me—for we've had two rather straining nights, and a longer spell of the trenches than usual. We had a stupid sort of incident in the trench yesterday P.M., a rifle went off accidentally as it lay by the side of a man who was sleeping there, and who must have caught the trigger somehow: damned fool hadn't got his

safety-catch down, and the thing hit another man clean through the calf—quite a nice gentlemanly wound—but still!'

5. The Destruction of Ypres

On the evening of Monday, April 19, the Cornwalls were relieved by the Royal Irish Regiment, who came up before they were expected. 'They gave us,' says the Subaltern, 'as reason for their early arrival a confused picture of heavy shelling of Ypres, from which they came, and to which we were to go, on being relieved, to "rest"!' This was the bombardment with the famous 17-inch guns, which practically ruined the town, and it was the preparation for the great attack which was to put the Germans at last in possession of Ypres and our communications. For this attack the enemy had not massed his reserves so heavily as in the previous attempt in November: he was relying on a surprise—a new and deadly weapon. It was in fact a very deadly weapon, and we had no time to equip ourselves against it; but it was not quite a surprise to the Allied commanders. On April 15, the French had reported to our G.O.C. that they were informed by German prisoners of an immediate attack to be made by the 26th Reserve Corps. These prisoners described how they had arranged in their trenches batteries of enormous tubes of asphyxiating gas: a battery of sixteen of these tubes to every 40 metres, and how at a given signal, when the wind was in the right direction, all these tubes were to be opened, and after a pause, to allow our men to become completely insensible from the arrival of the gases in their trenches, the Germans were to charge forward and mop them

up. Our General naturally had his doubts about this information; it seemed quite likely that the story was set about by the German Staff to make our troops nervous and prevent us from attacking. But he was too wary to take any chances in a war like this, so he at once sent information to all commanding officers. The regimental officers and the rank and file seem not to have been warned, either in the French army or in ours, and this no doubt was a wise decision, though it had its disadvantages.

The Subaltern knew nothing of this: he only knew that he was going into the town to be shelled, and even that was a relief after the trenches. 'It was a blessing,' he says, 'to get one's limbs well stretched after seventeen continuous days and nights in or just behind the firing line.' They reached Ypres by the Menin road, and the company quartermaster-sergeants took the men to their billets—mostly in the convent, where they had been billeted before, and the very place where the Royal Irish Regiment had lost the best part of a platoon and some officers that same day. 'There was a good deal of Staff-cursing when this fact was discovered and when we saw the state of ruin some of the building was in.' However, all was quiet when they arrived, 'and the sense of relief and peace after the strain of trenches was good. While the men were being served with hot tea, D Company officers were shown their billet—a decent-looking house in the Market Square and facing the Cloth Hall. Here we found our servants and valises, and a considerable mail. . . . We had a really good meal, and opened the parcels just as children do at Christmas time. It must have been nearly 2 A.M. before we got stretched out in our valises on the

floor of a big empty room. Lance was with us—I had insisted on his coming. Young Pinhey's valise remained rolled up in a corner of the room: his name in large letters on the outside. I felt pretty rotten about that: he was the first officer to go since I joined the Regiment, and he was such a good chap.'

The next two days were restless and miscellaneous —the kind of experience that is not often described in detail, so that it is worth while to give the Subaltern's account at some length. It begins with the early morning of Tuesday, April 20.

'I woke up—I suppose about 5 o'clock A.M.— with a great rolling roar running through my head. I was awfully annoyed at having been disturbed so soon, and every one else in the room was fast asleep. The light was streaming in through Venetian blinds and there were sounds of footsteps hurrying along the pavement outside. Suddenly, there was a terrific explosion: I knew then for certain that the town was being shelled again. Still, no one else woke up for what seemed an age, while I lay and wondered what I had best do. I looked out through the broken window-pane and saw a certain amount of debris already in the Square, but no one moving about.

'Two or three more shells came in and then I called to Lance. He sat up and said sleepily, "Then they're at it again, are they, the devils?" So gradually we got up and dressed. One of our servants came in with water and rumours of the complete annihilation of one platoon in another Company. I was surprised that no orders of any kind had come round by this time. I was in the middle of shaving when orders did come. All officers were wanted at once by the

C.O. Lance correctly foretold that only one officer from each Company was really wanted. I went on shaving. When the others came back I was diligently packing my valise, and was much laughed at for doing so and "always being so tidy," &c. However, I scored on this occasion (as on several others, if they would admit it), for the order was to move out of the town by half Companies at intervals of quarter of an hour. My Captain and V. went off almost at once; W. and I were to follow. Lance went off to collect his M.G.'s and men. W. and I had time to swallow a certain amount of what promised to be a first-class breakfast. . . .

'W. and I found most of the Battalion in "the Casemates"—a long dark tunnel of brickwork running back under a steep bank on the east side of the town. Here they were waiting, under the best shell-proof cover available, for their turn to run the gauntlet out of the town. It was a strange scene: the men sitting or lying down on the stone floor, all rather subdued: a few poor-looking peasants and small children selling chocolate and oranges, and outside a horrible-looking pile of odd bits of equipment and shattered rifles, many of them broken in two or three places. These, I learned, were the remains of our platoon which had been hit in the early morning. . . . Then there came another huge shell, one of their 17-inch things, evidently pretty near to us. W. and I set out with our half Company just after it landed, and hurrying into the Square, through which we had to pass, came upon an indescribable scene. The Square itself was now heaped up with broken bits of masonry and woodwork. We soon saw where the last big shell had pitched. A

large house at the corner of a street just opposite to our billet and on the other side of the Square had been completely knocked down. No single storey remained. As we hurried along picking our way through the debris stretcher-bearers were dashing about, excavating alive and dead from the ruin, which still smouldered with dust. The house had been a Brigade Headquarters, and we saw a dazed Staff Officer staggering out of the bricks. Our billet of only half an hour before, being exactly opposite, had had its top storeys blown down, no doubt by part of the shell which had carried on across the square. On the pavement beneath the remains of this house was a row of maimed bodies, corpses and parts of corpses. Fortunately our attention was considerably occupied in keeping our little party together and pushing them on. We went out of the town north-west, W. guiding in front and I pushing behind. On the way we passed Lance with two or three men, bewailing that he could not find half his machine-gunners and asking if we'd seen any of them. About a mile out of the town we came upon a little light railway running across the road and then (northwards) out into the fields along a raised embankment. We marched along the embankment through a field or two till we came upon a detachment of the 32nd (our 1st battalion), good-looking men and three or four officers. Just beyond them were our Colonel and Adjutant, with Captain H. and a good few of our men. It was a huge field, surrounded by thin hedges and little trees, and the embankment ran straight across the middle of it. As the rest of the battalion came in the men settled down by Companies all round under the hedges (to escape observation of air-craft), and began to make themselves "bivvies."

These are usually made each to hold three men, one man's waterproof sheet on the ground and the other two fixed up on sticks to make the sides.

'The rest of the day was peaceful and uneventful. All our officers collected at the entrance to the field and discussed the probability of our valises ever being seen again. My servant had told me that mine had certainly "gone West" when the house fell in. But it arrived in the evening safely with the others. We spread them all out in a row underneath the embankment. Lance and I put our two close together and fixed up his large brown waterproof sheet from the bank out on to sticks, so we had a fine head-covering.

'We all had a first-class picnic tea spread out on sheets in the corner of the field and at the edge of a lake which half-surrounded a curious round-shaped chateau built in red brick, which stood due west of our field. This chateau was a Canadian Headquarters of some kind, and on its other side (west) looked out on the high road to Brielen.

'The men seemed comfortably fixed up—though fires could not be allowed—so Lance and I went off for a stroll. . . . V. was superintending the preparations for dinner when we slipped back through the mud, and after the meal we got into our valises for the night. Our little Padre and one of the D.L.I. attachés had to spend the night in returning to Ypres with a burial party, and there attending the burial of our men and that of a Brigadier killed on this day.

Wednesday, April 21.—'After breakfast a staff officer rode up to say that this was not really our field at all, and we received orders to move elsewhere as soon as possible. The town was being shelled incessantly

again as we moved by companies, west, past the chateau and across the road to Brielen, and into a very attractive looking field just west of the road. The men set up their "bivvies" again round the hedges, and officers set up theirs (with their servants' help) close to their own companies. Then our valises came across; I got hold of Lance's again and rigged up a fine contrivance of sheets, rugs and sticks, which made a regular little tent for us both. C Company officers' bivvies were just next to ours. It was very refreshing getting into slacks and gum-boots and feeling that now at last we might reasonably expect to get some good rest. I went over to the entrance of the field, near the road, with a canvas bucket and had a real good wash in a duck-pond of green water. The pond lay in front of a pretty-looking farm and windmill. Every now and then came the long warning of the arrival of another 17-inch shell in the town—sounding like an express train rushing through the air, as someone described; we watched the two old towers sticking up, still untouched, and expected to see them come crashing down at last. But first one saw a sort of red dust-cloud mixed with masonry shoot up from some unexpected part of the town, and quite a considerable time afterwards came the terrific noise of the explosion: "it's cruel," was how the men described it. . . .

'We were all beginning to revive and cheer up a lot, mentally and physically, after the strain of our prolonged time in the trenches and the shelling of the previous day. Lance's company was delightful and invaluable. And we had quite passable meals on a big sheet spread out by the hedge. Moreover, we meant to sleep well that night. But we became

rather justifiably angry when the Adjutant came round and told us that D Company and one other

'So after dinner we duly paraded and marched off.'

(either A or B) had got to go up in the evening and dig reserve trenches or something at night. It seemed rather hard. But as I said before—it's somehow just possible to bear anything. So after dinner we duly paraded and marched off, at snail's pace, out on to

the road. After halting for some little time the whole order was cancelled and we marched back again, much pleased. But the really good night's rest was rather spoilt, as we had to sleep with boots on and fully equipped, in case we should be wanted in the night after all.'

6. The Coming of the Gas

The German attack had apparently been hanging fire nearly a week—they were no doubt waiting for a favourable wind. Even now that 'the day' had come, they did not make their move till late in the afternoon. The weather was brilliantly fine and warm. 'We just revelled,' the Subaltern says, 'in the hot sun and in the feeling that we were quite secure from bullets or shells. The 17-inch things came into Ypres at long intervals throughout the morning, as usual. We did an hour's musketry by platoons, rapid loading, snap shooting, &c. I collected my platoon afterwards and talked to them on the value of doing "muscle exercises" by themselves at odd moments, and foretold (curiously enough) an early opportunity for really accurate shooting as compared with the ordinary trench-shooting.

'Time passed happily. V. and I strolled over to get a better look at the chateau. Afterwards I had a good talk with Lance, who was going over to see his machine-gunners two or three fields away. I remember we examined several wild-flowers in a very attractive little ditch. The fields all round us were thick with other regiments which had been shelled out of the town; I cannot remember which any of the regiments were, excepting the Cambridgeshire

Regiment (T.F.), which was attached to our brigade. In the afternoon the men began kicking a football about in the middle of our field. Lance and I walked across to see O. and find out how he had got on when we left him in Ypres with his fatigue party. His company lived on the opposite side of the field to us, some 200 yards across. On the way we talked to two officers of the Worcester Regiment. They were just back after a week's leave in England, and told us the first New Army would all be in France by the end of May. We felt as if we were expecting their arrival, and another month was a long time to wait. We found O. grumbling rather that he'd left all his equipment in Ypres and by now it was probably lost. Meanwhile a proper game of soccer was going on, apparently Canadians *v.* the rest. Lance and I watched it for some time. Such was the general scene in our part of the world when the "Gas Attack" began. The various odd battalions of the 5th Corps resting in these big fields, about a mile out of Ypres to the north-west, with the chateau just east of us and between it and us the high road to Brielen. A long Canadian convoy (motor wagons) was standing on the side of the road.

'It must have been between 5 and 5.30 P.M. that we all suddenly became aware of an outburst of rapid firing and shelling far away to the north-east in the direction of Boesinghe-Pilkem-Langemarck. People stood up and looked in that direction, remarking that one side or the other must be attacking—which was obvious—or guessing more correctly that "we were in for it now." The firing and shelling became louder and louder till it reached an intermittent roar, and as we gazed the sky in that direction seemed to

get greener and greener. Football was still going on, but seemed gradually to stop of its own accord. Shrapnel was now bursting right over a line of woods on the horizon, which didn't seem very far away. The flashes seemed to be coming nearer, till they became quite distinct on the near side of the trees. I think we all realised then that the Germans were advancing, and advancing rapidly. The shells came on closer; we saw a confused picture of troops moving about, away in the front of the wood; then a more orderly line of what appeared to be cavalry moving northwards; someone tapped me on the shoulder and pointed out a sorry-looking cavalcade of horses and guns, ridden by men in French or Belgian uniform, moving slowly south on a small road behind our backs. I can't conceive now what they were doing. I looked round and saw the whole of our field moving with silent figures. Without orders the men were gradually returning to their places, and fitting together their equipment and belongings. Shells were bursting in quick succession not more than half a mile away over the road, and on the road itself and just beyond it there seemed to be considerable confusion. The Canadian convoy moved off and revealed a procession of peasants walking towards Brielen. Just then we began to get distinct whiffs of the gas, a smell that reminded me of an atmosphere of hospitals and operation theatres. A French Zouave came running into the field jabbering away and gesticulating with his arms. I heard him repeat the word "asphyxié" several times.

'Overhead a German Taube flew high straight from

"A FRENCH ZOUAVE CAME RUNNING INTO THE FIELD JABBERING AWAY AND GESTICULATING WITH HIS ARMS"

the fighting and away over our heads to the south-west. As it passed it dropped two smoke trails, one over the road and one behind us. My captain wrote a report of this and sent it to the C.O. The shells were falling just short of a farm on the other side of the Brielen road opposite to our windmill; and one wondered if they would reach into our field. Evidently the Germans had come over a considerably good piece of ground. I remember at that moment speculating on the possibility of another retreat, to be known as the Great Retreat from Ypres, in which we should certainly be acting as rearguard, and wondered what it would be like. Then it seemed to get dark quite quickly, and the shelling came to an end and the rifle-fire in the distance died down.

'I got out of my gum-boots and into my puttees and marching boots, and began getting my equipment ready, and packed up my valise. Lance smiled, assuring me that it was quite unnecessary; we had had no orders and it was unlikely that we should be wanted that night. He remained in his slacks, and incidentally had to fight in them next day and remain in them for many trying days after that. The Adjutant came round to say that everyone must be ready to move at a moment's notice; otherwise we were to carry on as usual.

'Then would have been the time if it had been possible to lay in a store of food: to see that the men got emergency rations. As it was I believe they had none. The remains of the ordinary day's rations they must have eaten sometime during this (Thursday) evening; they got no further rations until Saturday. D Company officers collected what they could from

the company mess box. I got a piece of bread (which I ate that night) and a very small tin of sardines.

'I think most of the men's "bivvies" were still up; certainly C and D Company's officers' were. Lance had gone off to see to his guns. Time passed and nothing seemed to be happening. N. came round from B Company, and he and V. and I strolled out on to the road. There were lamps lit in the farm on the opposite side (facing our windmill), and we passed and talked to several Canadians and one or two sentries of our own. They all gave us the same story; how the French had run away from the gas, but the position had been completely saved by "the boys" (i.e. Canadians), who were said to have done wonders. The account made one glow and feel much more comfortable inside.'

They might well glow; no finer stand was ever made. Without warning and without any possible remedy the Canadians of the 3rd Brigade had found themselves left with a gap of four miles on their left flank, a new and unknown form of death seizing their throats and lungs, and line after line of Germans bearing down upon them. It is their peculiar glory that at their very first big chance they stepped at once into the front rank as fighting men. They would neither let the enemy through them nor past them; by one desperate counter-attack after another they held their ground till the yawning gap beyond could be filled. It was filled, we have been told in more than one history, 'very early in the small hours of Friday morning,' but as you will see it was not filled in reality until the afternoon.

Let us go back to the Cornwalls in their field. While

they were eating their bit of bread and talking of the Canadians, the General had placed them, with seven other miscellaneous reserve battalions, under the command of Colonel Geddes of the Buffs. He was to do what he could to help the Canadians and the 13th Brigade to keep the Germans from advancing on Ypres, which was laid entirely open by the retreat of the French Colonial troops. There could be no artillery support, for the French had reported the loss of their own nine batteries and also of four English heavy guns which had been placed in a wood in their area. All that could be done was to make a bluffing counter-attack towards the new German line, and hold them to their trenches until their reserves could dig themselves in. The attacking companies would no doubt be sacrificed hopelessly; but in the meantime a new line could be made good behind them.

It was near midnight before all this was arranged and the eight battalions of 'Geddes' detachment' got the order to move. The Subaltern had been expecting it. The regiment paraded quickly and silently. They were in fours, on the road just outside the chateau, where there seemed to be a hopeless confusion of standing and moving troops and transport. It was very dark and everyone was asking everyone else who they were. The answer to this question is always given in a tone of deep resentment at being asked.

Suddenly the front of the column moved off towards Ypres at a very fast pace. The Subaltern, with his platoon, was two-thirds of the way down the column and found it very difficult to keep touch with those in front. This is a common trouble in night-marching and now it was particularly bad, as the men had to keep running

all the way until they got through the town. The Subaltern passed up a message to the front and received the answer that the present pace was necessary. So he ran up and down the line telling his men that they must try and stick it. They did stick it, for the best part of a mile, sweating freely under greatcoats and full packs. Their march through Ypres was a wonderful one; the town was quite deserted, though a few lights showed dimly from basement or cellar windows. They went through the familiar Square, in which the two untouched towers stood up high and black out of the surrounding ruins, and on to the east, where the high road runs out over the Canal, passing on their way close to the men's old billet—the Convent. Some houses—perhaps the Convent itself—were blazing away and shooting flames into the sky.

They hurried on to the fork, where the road branches off to the right, and took the upper road towards Potijze. Then at last the pace slackened. The Subaltern looked back over his shoulder again and again, and felt that he knew what burning Rome must have been like: if like Ypres, it was a fine sight. His pack felt lighter now; the men, too, were evidently happier and showed it in a few odd remarks, mostly curses. It was not yet dawn, but daylight was creeping in as they approached Potijze, turned to the left, and almost doubled back through a few small houses. Then they turned off the road sharp to the right and went up a muddy track on the edge of a field. At the top of a rise they came upon a battery of Canadian field guns, men and horses looking tired, about to move off towards the road; then another turn to the right through a sort of park gate into Potijze Wood. There a halt was

called and the men were ordered to lie down just as they were, by companies.

It was quite light now, about 4.30 A.M. Everyone was glad to sit down; but the order came to keep as still as possible, and no smoking was allowed. This was hard on the men and they found it difficult to obey. The Subaltern sat for some time in a kind of lethargy: when he looked up the officers near him and most of the men were fast asleep. He felt rather cold and ate some chocolate; then, not being sleepy, he got up and took stock of the surroundings. Down the slope below was a dark-looking chateau — General Snow's head-quarters. Lying in the woods near were two Scottish regiments wearing tam-o'-shanters. Above were two small field guns, cleverly concealed in the undergrowth at the northern edge of the wood. They began to fire at long intervals and in turn: two men ran out in front of them with telephone wires. German guns replied almost at once, evidently 'searching' for our two. Their shells came to earth at regular intervals all through the morning, pitching close to the guns at the edge of the wood, but never doing any damage. The Subaltern began to count them: out of twelve successive shells eight failed to explode, but one scattered pieces on the dry leaves all round him. Captain B. (second-in-command) who was talking to the C.O. and the Adjutant under a tree, came over and told him to sit down: no one was allowed to move at all.

The morning passed somehow in listening to the guns and the buzzing of aeroplanes, and wondering what was going to be done. Between 1 o'clock and 2 o'clock P.M., came the order to move by companies to a certain farm, northwards. While D Company was waiting its

turn, Lance and the transport officer came up, having had their horses and transport heavily shelled on the way from Potijze, but without serious casualties. The transport officer produced from his pocket a few small mixed biscuits, which were greedily devoured.

Then Captain U. and the Subaltern led off. At the top of a rise they saw, running across their front, the high road between St. Jean and Wieltje, with a line of ugly St. Jean villas on the left. On the road was the Adjutant, crouching down. He signalled, and the company stopped and lay down, just short of the road. A spent bullet struck Captain U. in the boot, and the Subaltern realised that they were somewhere near the fight. The Adjutant signalled again: the Company rose and ran forward across the road and down a lane on the other side, to a farm some three hundred yards on. It was a typical Belgian farm—three sides of a square, with a dirty yard in the middle. The place smelt—a dead horse lay stretched out in the yard.

D Company was blocked here for some time. The Subaltern pushed through into the farm-house and found eight or nine Canadians sitting about in the kitchen. He asked if there was any water to be got, or any biscuits. They said there was no food; one picked up a pail and said he would get some milk, but another shouted he had just milked the last cow dry. There was no water either.

When the Subaltern got outside again one platoon had disappeared. He went to the west end of the building and saw what was happening. One by one, at short intervals, the men were running round the end of the building and across a grass field to a low hedge on the far side, 200 yards away. As they reached it,

they were starting to dig in behind the hedge, facing north. His own platoon did the same manœuvre in its turn. Shrapnel occasionally burst quite close to them; but there was not much of it, and no rifle fire, nor any sign of the enemy up the next slope. He was surprised at this, for as the last of his men left the farm the Canadians had called to them 'Good luck, boys! Give 'em socks, same as we did last night!'

D Company was now in front, with B Company prolonging the line on their right, and the other two digging in somewhere behind, out of sight. Some five hundred yards to the right front was a line of new-turned earth, and men digging in behind a ruined farm—probably the famous Shell-trap Farm—and 200 yards to the immediate front were two Canadian guns behind another hedge, but within half an hour these were withdrawn and disappeared.

Out in the field in front shrapnel was bursting—harmlessly, at first, but presently it came much closer, and two or three men were hit. Also stretcher-bearers kept on coming down from Shell-trap Farm with wounded Canadians, carrying them through the hedge and on to the rear. The Subaltern began to be worried about the indefiniteness of things: his platoon was on the extreme left, with its flank in the air. There were no other troops visible on that side. He had no idea of what had really happened in this battle since it began twenty hours before, nor of what was supposed to be doing now. Then Lance came along with one of his sergeants and fixed up a couple of machine-guns in the hedge and took ranges of points up the slope. This was very cheering—it was always cheering to know that Lance was about.

By 3.30 P.M. the men had dug about as much as they could stand. They had no food, and there was very little water left in their bottles. If they couldn't get anything to eat, they longed only to be left undisturbed and get some rest. This was their condition when the real call came. Company Commanders were sent for to see the C.O. at the farm. When Captain U. came back, his three subalterns went half-way across to meet him. 'The regiment will attack at once!'

7. The Attack

The three subalterns, of course, asked their captain for details of the instructions. He gave what he could, but the orders he had received were strictly limited. B and D Companies were to move off as soon as possible, as firing-line in an attack. No definite objective was stated. The battalion was to bear left-handed, and the Pilkem road to be its left. It would be the right-hand-most regiment in the attack, having a battalion of Royal Scots (T.F.) next on its left. A and C Companies would be in support. No information was given as to the present distance from the enemy; but the attacking force was to move off in artillery formation of platoons in single file at intervals, and to keep working up the hedges. Nothing was said about any troops or trenches—British, Canadian, or French—which were to be met with, supported, or passed through before reaching the enemy.

It was the omission of all these details which puzzled the subalterns—the orders seemed precise in sound, but in fact they created a mystery. It is easy now to see that this was necessarily so. To give details would have been impossible, no General could have given an

order like this :—' Lieut.-Colonel A. will take command of a brigade in another part of the field : he will hand over the command to Captain B. The regiment with seven others will be used as they can be got to the front, to bluff the enemy. The leading half-battalions will be thrown all together, or in twos and threes, into the gap on the Canadian left; their objective is to keep up the appearance of an offensive, while the other half of each battalion makes a new line and digs in. The attacking companies have only to get as far forward as they can and die there : they will be successful if they do not die before dark. The enemy must not move on Ypres.'

Captain U. gave his own orders for D Company and sent out a party of scouts. The Subaltern and W. were to form front line, with the platoons at 50 yards' interval in single file : V. to follow at 200 yards' distance with the other two platoons in support. They were shown the Pilkem road on a map and directed to move to the left front, but without crossing this road. The Subaltern went off and told his sergeant all he knew ; then addressed his platoon. What he said to them is not known — one effect was to brace him up himself, and he felt then, and several times afterwards, what a blessing it is to be an officer and always have something to do and to be busy about.

The captain came up to the head of the Subaltern's platoon and they led off in silence : a field away on the right Lieutenant M. could be seen leading off B Company; it was all very much like a practice attack in peace-training. Going up the first slope they met no shelling or rifle fire, and no troops were in sight, friends or enemies, in any direction. Half-way up they passed

a turf-covered dug-out and two old battered and deserted guns in a hedge. Just under the ridge they came upon a good white road running across their

'Two old battered and deserted guns in a hedge.'

front, and on the near edge of it were some English troops dug in fairly deep. They were part of the 1st York and Lancaster Regiment, but could give no other information. Captain U. and the Subaltern led on across the road, and up a steep bit of plough on to the top of the ridge.

The first thing that struck them was that there was nothing to see, not a sign of anything moving, not a sound of an enemy. Then suddenly the whole valley in front seemed to burst out into a roar of rifle and machine-gun fire. The advance had up to this point covered about a thousand yards; now the front showed a long gentle slope of plough down to a little bottom and then a rather steeper rise up to the next ridge and sky-line—in distance about a thousand yards more. On that sky-line, as the Subaltern guessed, were the Germans, holding an old line of reserve trenches from which they had driven the French with gas the day before.

The two officers went forward, the platoon followed over the ridge and began at once to feel the enemy's fire; several men fell. The Subaltern looked along the ridge and saw W. with his platoon coming over it rather farther to the right than he had expected; he extended at once to the right, in order to help him to keep touch. The two platoons shook out into a very fair line. The Subaltern ran on and took his platoon some little way down the slope, then halted, and all dropped down. By this time B Company must have been passing though a farm away on the right: and beyond them Lance was opening fire from his machine-guns, but neither he nor B Company were in sight of D. On the left, too, the ground was so uneven that the Subaltern could not see whether it held any troops or not. It was important, he felt sure, to get into touch with the next battalion on the left, and he had already sent scouts to see if they could find the Royal Scots whom he had been told to expect there. No message came back; owing, no doubt, to the difficulty of the Staff work, the order to attack reached the Royal Scots an hour late. But

now some khaki figures were seen swarming up the slope opposite in extended order, right away on the left front, and beyond them still more and more little khaki dots. It was puzzling to see no sign of the Pilkem road, which must be lying somewhere between. One can think and feel many things in a very short space of time. The Subaltern took in the landscape, made his comments upon it to himself, saw several of his men roll over with a groan, and had a startling sense that he might be dead at any moment—all this in the thirty seconds of the halt. Then he got off his knee and ran on again. The line came suddenly upon a sunk road running slightly diagonally across the advance. This is a well known obstacle for 'the Attack' in peace-training—any obstruction which runs at an angle across the line of advance tends to make the men lose sense of direction and to spoil the general line of advance. Here was just a case in point. The men on the left swarmed down into the road, and finding that the banks of it afforded a certain amount of cover, began to go on down the road instead of crossing it and carrying on. When they were halted, the Subaltern found that the right end of his platoon was still keeping straight, but the rest of the men were lying under the banks badly crowded up.

This was serious and must be quickly remedied. He decided to move on again at once, and overruled his sergeant, who thought that the men 'couldn't do it.' The difficulty was to give them clear instructions. Messages are usually supposed to be passed down the line from man to man, or from section commander to section commander. But here there was no time for that, and moreover the noise of the rifles and machine-

guns was absolutely deafening, and the Subaltern was determined that there should be no mistake about the left incline, which was vitally important in order to get into touch with the attack on the left. So he abandoned rules, and ran along the line himself, tapping a man every here and there with the ash stick which served him for a sword, and yelling at them 'Next time left incline—those trees down at the bottom on the left, d'you see?' Then he took them on. It gave him a pang to see how many were left lying on the hill-side as he looked back.

The plough as they advanced was spitting up earth all around them, just as in a magnified hailstorm, and bullets cracked in their ears incessantly. The air seemed so thick that they felt as if they were facing a strong gale of wind, and instinctively bent forward against it. Much of the fire was coming from machine-guns in some farm buildings away on the right front. There were apparently eight or nine of them, Lance reported afterwards. He did inestimable service in keeping them worried, and silenced two or three.

Another rush or two carried the advance to the bottom of the little valley, and there was a longer rest. W. came in on the right and the remains of the two platoons joined up. Both had lost heavily. The left incline had been finely carried out and the general line, the Subaltern thought, might have been much worse than it was. It was now lying along a row of little stunted willows with a small stream beyond them and a thick hedge on the other side. Beyond the hedge a green field sloped up steeply to a long line of farm buildings, 300 yards up, and somewhere behind those buildings the Germans must be entrenched. Lance

afterwards reported that they had had a machine-gun in the farm, but had retired in face of the attack.

The men were now sweating freely: they were in full marching order and wearing greatcoats, and the excitement added to the effect. The air was nauseating —owing no doubt to the gas still hanging about—and some were sick. When the time came to get forward they pressed to be allowed to throw off their packs. The captain gave the order accordingly; the Subaltern passed it on, but kept his own pack on his back, and thereby saved his life, as it chanced.

He found a gap in the hedge and led through it, after jumping the stream. The men came after him slowly, making a bit of a fuss about the jump—an odd thing to boggle at after what they had come through. As they got over, the Subaltern extended them into a very fair line, and they moved up the dead ground, almost without loss. On the way a scared-looking, dark-skinned boy appeared from nowhere. The Subaltern only just succeeded in saving him, and then, thinking he was probably a French Colonial, he sent him back to headquarters with a man in charge.

The farm seemed likely to be a dangerous place, but the men were very much exhausted and the losses had been heavy; the enemy were close but not yet exactly located; to push on at once was almost impossible. The men were ordered to lie down behind the farm buildings. In front of them, from left to right, ran a temporary structure of wooden posts roofed over with corrugated iron, about nine feet high. On the far side it had a back or wall of a single sheet of corrugated iron, so that it presented the appearance

of a long narrow shed, open on the near side and about four feet wide. At one extremity of it the floor was stacked with a quantity of live shells standing up on end; they had evidently been abandoned by the French on the previous day. At the right end of the shed a small road passed between it and the rest of the buildings and ran up the hill; at the left end stood a small round gun emplacement of corrugated iron, then there was a gap of some twenty yards, and beyond that the line was carried on by a thick hedge.

D Company was now lying behind the shed, and B Company was coming up behind the farm. On the left the Subaltern could see a thick line of khaki figures lying behind the hedge—troops almost in touch at last. He thought it important to find out what they knew of the enemy's position, and as messages had failed altogether so far, he got his captain's leave to go across the gap himself. The fire was very hot, but he got safely across and lay down beside the nearest man. His information was that they were the 1st York and Lancaster Regiment and had had an awful time of it. This was obviously true enough, for their dead were stretched thick all over the field below, but it was not very useful. The Subaltern suggested that they would be better off a little in front of the hedge, which was ranged accurately by the enemy. The man replied that the whole line of them were now dead or wounded. This also appeared to be true, so the Subaltern got up and ran back across the gap. As he went, a bullet took him in the middle of his pack and knocked him flat on his face. It had passed through all the contents of his pack and lodged close to the spine without penetrating. No harm was done,

but he gave thanks that he had kept his pack on when the men threw theirs off.

The tin shed was now found to be not much protection. Bullets came splashing through the tin wall, which was riddled with little holes. Eight or nine men were lying outside behind a dung-heap dressing their wounds. One man was hit in the side as he stood just in front of the Subaltern. He slowly undressed himself—equipment, great-coat, tunic, shirt, vest, all came off; then his breeches—he still could not tell where he was hit. When he found the wound he put on some iodine very carefully, standing almost naked and shivering; then slowly dressed again and crawled away behind the dung-heap.

By this time V. had come up with a few men, the remnant of his two platoons; he had a bullet in his shoulder and looked very ill. So did W., who was in the same condition. Then the Subaltern saw his captain being dressed by a couple of men—he had just taken one in the thigh. He himself was now the only officer in the company unwounded; but V., though hard hit, was not yet done.

It seemed to the Subaltern vitally important to get the men forward in front of the shed and farm, but to do this successfully more men must be collected. He examined the position, with his eye to a bullet hole in the wall, and thought he could make out the face of the enemy's trench; he was right, for presently a German helmet appeared against the sky-line, perhaps 200 yards away. He had already sent back to ask for reinforcements, but without result; now a good soldier volunteered to go and repeat the message. The Subaltern watched him going, along a line of

stunted willows; half-way along, a shrapnel shell burst on the tree he was passing and blew it flat down. Then his arms were seen signalling that he was done for and someone else must take on his job; both his legs had been riddled.

Shrapnel had found the farm at last. It came from very close range, for the reports of the gun and the shell were almost simultaneous—bang! bang! At first it was mostly directed at the hedge on the left, and played terribly among the York and Lancaster men there and a few odd reinforcements struggling up the hill to them. It came enfilading from the right front, and was evidently passing right over the shed, which might at any moment become untenable. But the men, who had now begun smoking in imitation of their wounded captain, were wonderfully steadied by their cigarettes, and some of them actually began to recover the use of their tongues.

At last the Subaltern, looking down the slope, saw some men—perhaps a platoon—coming up from the hedge below. He recognised Captain B. (now C.O.) and the Adjutant, in front, and signalled vigorously for them to come on up. When they arrived, he took the two officers into a shed and, through a bullet-hole, pointed out the enemy's position. Captain B. seemed doubtful at first—probably he could not understand how the advance could have got so near without coming across French or English troops on the way. The Subaltern offered him his glasses and shouted above the noise of the shells, 'Well, look! You can see the German helmets on the sky-line.'

A captain of the York and Lancaster came over to consult. Lieutenant N. also came across from the farm

and reported that B Company had lost two officers;

'He took the two officers into a shed and, through a bullet-hole, pointed out the enemy's position.'

P. had been killed back on the plough, and M. was now dead too. B Company had caught a German

sitting in the kitchen of the farm and telephoning to the enemy's guns. He had been killed in the act, and the Subaltern could not help admiring even then the bravery of the man who had sat in that kitchen waiting till the attack had collected behind the farm and shed, and then had just switched on shrapnel at the right moment. He must have expected his fate. But he had done his job: the shrapnel suddenly came sweeping the whole line of the farm: the fury and the pace of it were tremendous.

There was no question now what must be done. Captain B. simply said to the Subaltern: 'You must get forward out of this at once.' The chaos and crash of the shrapnel were bewildering. Part of the roof of the shed was gone and men were lying about everywhere in ghastly attitudes of death. V. and the Subaltern rushed about collecting the men who could move, and they all poured up the road in front: the ground was dotted about with thick-trunked elm-trees. The Germans evidently saw the advance and gave it a tremendous fusillade of rifle and machine-gun fire.

Some little way up on the right of the road—now a mere cart-track—there was a small hollow in the ground leading to a duck-pond. The Subaltern got his men down into this hollow, which was good cover so long as they lay down, and then walked to the edge of the water. He found that the front edge of the pond was lined with a deep grass-and-mud bank holding the roots of the trees in front. This bank would form a very good breastwork behind which the men could stand and fire; it ran forty or fifty yards away to the right and was exactly parallel to the enemy's position. He began filing men along it to the right; they went

in a ludicrously careful way, much more afraid of wet feet than bullets.

Captain B. and the Adjutant had stayed behind near the farm; B Company had not yet all joined up; V. was nowhere to be seen. The Subaltern realised that he was 'on his own' now. He felt rather shaky from the effects of gas and hunger, so he laid aside a rifle which he found himself carrying, and sat down for a moment or two. Sitting near him were V.'s platoon sergeant and the sergeant-majors of the two Companies; with them he discussed the advisability of a final rush in at the enemy. They thought, reasonably enough, that two companies now numbering together not more than ninety men, were unlikely to do much good against an untouched enemy in strong entrenchments, not only because of the force being so small but because it was entirely unsupported on either flank. The Subaltern rather agreed, but continued to weigh the possibilities.

At this moment the sergeant touched him on the shoulder and pointed some little way out to the left among the trees: there was V. rolling over on the ground like a shot rabbit. When the others turned into the hollow he must have stopped behind a tree and taken cover there: it was like his pluck to have come on at all after being wounded. Now he was hit again and must be got into the safety of the hollow. None of the men volunteered to go out for him: they looked to their officer. It came into the Subaltern's mind that perhaps he ought not to go, being the only officer left to command. Then suddenly he saw that he was desperately frightened, for the first time in his life. But V. was struggling along towards the hollow;

the Subaltern got up, ran out to him, flopped down by him, got him by the heels, and wriggled back with him. He felt it was a good chance spoiled by terror.

The sergeant dressed the wounded man: there was a bullet-hole in one of the breast pockets of his tunic, and one of his arms was broken. The Subaltern went away to give orders: when he returned V. was asking for him. He spoke slowly, and said he wished the Subaltern to keep his revolver and the things in his pockets. They both thought he was dying.

It was now getting dusk and the Subaltern had decided not to move till it was dark. About this time, though he did not know it, Lance came across the battlefield and found the line of the York and Lancaster lying behind their hedge. He walked up to them in the twilight and suggested cheerily that they would do better to get forward a little. They did not answer him: there was none left to answer.

About this time a German boy of sixteen or seventeen was brought in—he had been shot through the ear and was very much frightened. Then came two French mitrailleuse gunners; the Subaltern talked to them in hope of information, but they were chiefly concerned about some baskets of food which they had left near the farm the day before. Then N. turned up from B Company, with a bullet in his foot; he shook the Subaltern by the hand, wished him luck, and hobbled off.

Captain B. himself came up from the farm. He was a man to inspire confidence anywhere, and the Subaltern was thankful to see him again and to feel that he knew where the two Companies were. He gave the order to hold on and went away to make arrangements for getting into touch during the night.

Finally O. came along from B Company, evidently suffering from concussion. He showed no trace of nerves but was wandering in his speech; a couple of men were sent back to see that he got safely into the doctor's hands.

When he had gone—the seventh of the eight officers in the attack—a sense of heavy responsibility came upon the Subaltern. He was eighty yards from the enemy's position, in sole command of the wreckage of two Companies.

8. Making the New Line

Firing had now ceased, but as time went on the position did not appear less anxious. German flares began to go up: one of them dropped right into the hollow and revealed the nearness of the opposing lines. The Subaltern noticed some odd-looking earth-heaps on his right front: he sent out a patrol, who reported them as empty French dug-outs. Then to his indescribable astonishment, V., who had for some time been lying apparently dead, rose suddenly to his feet, remarked in a quite natural voice that he must go back now, and went off to the farm without assistance.

Next, Captain I. of A Company appeared with an escort of three or four men. He said his Company were now down by the little stream in the bottom below. The Subaltern handed over to him the German prisoner and the Frenchmen and he went back. There was now nothing to do but hold on till Captain B. returned or sent orders. The time was very long and the uncertainty very trying. The Subaltern had almost given up hope and was beginning to consider his next move, when he suddenly saw Captain B. behind a tree calling

to him. The men were to be retired down the road and collected behind the farm: from there the Adjutant would show them the place where they were to dig in. It was about 9.30 P.M.

It was strange to move down that road again without a shot or sound of any kind, and stranger still, and very pleasant, to hear soon afterwards the sound of voices talking naturally once more. The Adjutant and the Subaltern collected all that was left of B and D Companies—with stragglers and messengers, perhaps 100 men—and took them down in a south-west direction, passing below the York and Lancaster hedge and so down to the stream, well to the left of where they had crossed it in the afternoon. The whole ground about here was plough, and through it ran the Pilkem road which they had never found before.

At this point the whole battalion was now assembled, and at once began to dig in. The Subaltern's Company started down at the bottom, and extended to the road and across it; on the right A Company carried on, and then C Company. He himself, after seeing that the men had got their line straight and were well started, went with the Adjutant to see if they were fitting in correctly with other troops digging in on the left. The two officers came upon an extraordinary muddle of odd bits of various regiments all digging in: Canadians, Buffs, King's Own, York and Lancaster, and several others. Many men were snoring at the bottom of deep pits they had dug for themselves. The Adjutant turned out a lot of these men and the Subaltern started some of them digging in on a better sort of line. He was now becoming rather exhausted: the Adjutant made him sit down for a bit and gave him two or three hard ration-biscuits.

It was now discovered that the battalion which had begun digging in on the right had for some reason been moved away, so that the regiment's right flank was in the air: a rearrangement became necessary. A and C Companies moved away to the right until they came into touch with the York and Lancaster: on the left a newly arrived battalion took over the ground of B and D Companies between the stream and the road, and the Subaltern had to shift and hold the space of plough on the right of the road. He was short of men and had to spread out to four or five yards per man: his right rested on a corner of a hedge enclosing an orchard and a farm, and A and C Companies were separated from him by this enclosure, which was about 200 yards across. It was partly filled during the night by a stray platoon of the Middlesex Regiment.

The Subaltern's men dug very well, considering how terribly exhausted they were. Some of them managed to get three or four feet down, and he spent his time in urging them to connect their various pits into a continuous line. Lance came round during the night, and, finding him busy, went away without attracting his attention. The captains of A and C Companies also came round, and four of their subalterns: Captain B. and the Adjutant were of course moving about too. A group of three officers were together when a Brigade Major came by and asked who they were. They sat round him on the ground and explained, bombarding him with somewhat pointed questions. He was sorry about the lack of artillery support—there had been only two guns available and they had failed to work. He recognised that one man to four or five yards was too thin, and went away saying that

he would try and send some more: but that the line must be held at all costs. It was now about 2 o'clock A.M.

The Subaltern then made a short reconnaissance of the orchard and its hedges, in company with Captain B. and the officers commanding A and C Companies. Even as far back as this they found many dead York and Lancaster men lying about. Three or four shrapnel came over and burst in the plough below. They made a big flare, but no one seemed to mind them. Parties of men were fetching in the wounded and carrying them back along the Pilkem road to a dressing station. One man was found lying in the ditch by the roadside, quite paralysed. The Cornwall officers also met a Colonel and eight men making their way back along the road; the Colonel said the men were all he had left of his battalion and he was taking them back to Ypres. Other lost men were going the same way. It was now getting light.

In the orchard the Subaltern had found a couple of spades which he took back to the top of his line. There he found his sergeant and the two sergeant-majors, and with the spades and some entrenching-tools they all set to work. Only a couple of feet down they came to water; but the Subaltern fetched some great-coats, and as it was quite light they sat down to rest on them in the water. The parapet of loose earth in front was only just high enough to cover the Subaltern's head as he sat against it. The men were so done that they lay motionlesss in their holes, like drunken men, showing no sign of life. The lack of food and water had been very trying. During the night the Subaltern had sent out a corporal with a ration party, but they had not

yet returned. Water-bottles were quite empty. Two men fetched a pailful of green and foul water from the farm, and some drank it. The Subaltern had given the

'With the spades and some entrenching tools they all set to work.'

contents of his bottle to the wounded and his sergeants; for food he had had almost none since Thursday afternoon. He began to realise what it must be like to starve.

To pass time he took off his pack and laid it on his lap. He loosened his burberry, which was strapped on outside, and found it was no more than a tattered

rag; the bullet had gone through its many folds and torn them into strips. He opened the pack and found the little bright metal sheath of the bullet. It had penetrated and destroyed, besides the burberry, a canteen, the wooden handle (2 inches thick) of a periscope and its three plates of glass, a towel, and a tin of solid slabs of chocolate; then it had gone on and inflicted a good bruise close to the spine. The leaden core had melted out into the pack.

It was now time to be on the look-out. Of the three non-commissioned officers one was dead beat, and one shivering with ague, but the third was up kneeling against the front of his trench and scanning the valley below. His cheeriness, good sense, and good temper filled the Subaltern with admiration; he got out his field-glass and arranged to take turns with him in watching the line. It was a grim scene. A dozen yards in front a man was lying with his white face to the sky and his hair covered over with a bandage. There were others at intervals, all quite motionless, down the slope to the stream. Up the opposite slope the ground by the old York and Lancaster hedge was thick with men and equipment and great-coats. The Subaltern was glad to see that there were only a few left lying round the farm; but the hollow beyond it he could not see.

His present distance from the enemy he put at 800 yards; the line of new-turned earth must be very clear to them, and he expected a shelling presently. He got it. Every kind of shell, high explosive, and shrapnel came shrieking over the valley. Happily they were badly directed; a few fell just short of his line, others short of A Company, but the majority pounded

the orchard and the ground behind the farm; B and D Companies had only one slight casualty this time. The men in any case had become fairly callous. Either now, or at some time before this, Captain B. was hit, and the command of the regiment devolved on Captain H., but hardly anyone knew this till afterwards.

At last the ration party returned with a sack of loaves and some very dirty bacon fat. It was distributed—hardly more than a mouthful per man; the Subaltern got a little bread, but could not face the fat. Both he and his men were tired almost past eating.

After this, as neither Captain B. nor the Adjutant reappeared, he left his sergeants in command, and set out to visit A Company. This meant creeping up the ditch of the hedge on the east side of the orchard. On the other side of the hedge he could see some lifeless men of the Middlesex Regiment in their manholes. At the top of the hill stood a single wall of brick, the remains of an outhouse. A man warned him that there were snipers at work on this spot. But snipers did not sound worth considering now, nor did the shells which were bursting on the far side of the orchard.

He reached A Company and found Captain H. scraping away at a hole with an entrenching tool. In the next hole were Captain J. and Lieutenant L. He lay down with them and surveyed their position, which was not so good as his own, because it had a certain amount of dead ground in front of it. They had no news of the Colonel, or of Captain B., or the Adjutant; they did not then know that the Colonel had been called away to command elsewhere, just before the attack. The Subaltern had to return without orders.

Then a French corporal and seven or eight men appeared, and lay down just behind the end of his trench. His sergeants objected to this; the blue coats were very conspicuous and might draw the Germans' fire. The Subaltern invited the corporal to bring his party right into the trench, but he replied that he must go on with a reconnaissance for his battalion which was coming up to attack at night. The Subaltern wished him *bon voyage* and shook hands, then watched him with his party alternately doubling and dropping and doubling down the slope, joining another party at the bottom and swarming up the old hillside to the old farm of yesterday. Then they disappeared; not a single shot had been fired at them.

The Subaltern decided to report what he had heard to Captain H. As he crept along the hedge this time he heard the unmistakable noise of French 75's firing from the direction of Ypres. He turned to watch: it was the most comforting thing that had happened yet, to hear them and to see that they had already got the range of the enemy. On the old ridge, a little to the left, they were tearing up the sky-line and then lifting beyond it, where the German line bent back towards Pilkem.

In reply the German guns lifted a little over the orchard and kept up a furious sweep of the ground beyond the farm, scattering the farm cows in every direction. The Subaltern found A Company crouching in their holes, with the storm bursting just beyond them. He reported his news and talked for a bit with J. and L. They gave him some thin white wine from the farm in a little folding cup. It revived him a good deal.

It was now becoming dusk, and Captain H. advised him to go back to his Companies and send out a patrol as soon as it was dark enough. The men, when he reached them, were too tired to volunteer, so he and his sergeant had to fetch some of them out of their holes. He sent out the patrol; but before it came back, either near his own trench or in the orchard, a shell found him at last, and the world went out. This was in the evening of Saturday, April 24.

He first came to on a hospital ship, which left Boulogne on the afternoon of Monday, April 26. He saw O., who came and said something to him. Then he saw Captain B. Then he caught sight of his own ash-stick lying under the cot of an officer next to him. He had not seen it since he dropped it by the farm to take up a rifle in the middle of the attack.

When he came to again he was hanging up near the roof of a hospital train in England. He heard one R.A.M.C. officer say to another, 'Then here we've got a bad case of shell concussion—out of his mind, I think.' He wished to say that he was all right, but no words came. When he woke up again he found himself in bed in a little room at Queen Alexandra's Hospital. It was Tuesday afternoon, April 27.

THE STORY OF TWO ADMIRALS

1. One of the Mysteries of War

There are many mysteries in war. Some are only mysteries so long as the war lasts—concealments kept up for a time on the chance of misleading or embarrassing the enemy. Then there are certain inventions and methods which must remain secret even after peace is made, because they may some day be wanted again. But these, like the first, are only mysteries by intention—in each case there are those who know but cannot tell. The third kind of mystery is the most interesting one, the secret which we long to know, but which can never be explained because it is no longer possible to question those who alone could give the answer. Such cases are much commoner in time of war than in peace; in war it often happens that a man's time comes before he can say what is in his mind, and every now and then it happens that the man who dies suddenly in this way is a man whose last thoughts we would give a great deal to know.

There are some famous cases of this kind. If Nelson had come back alive from Trafalgar, we should not have had to wait more than a hundred years for the historians to settle how he meant to fight the battle and how he actually did fight it. In the Crimean War there was a mystery about the charge of the Light

Brigade. It was a mistake—we know that 'someone had blundered,' but we shall never know for certain how the mistake arose, because we cannot have the evidence of Captain Nolan, who brought the order. A shell killed him instantly as he rode out in front of the Brigade at the very start. It is thought that he was trying to put them right at the moment when he fell.

In 1914, this nation was faced with a more important problem of the same kind, and one even more difficult to solve. On November 1 in that year, Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, in command of three cruisers and one armed liner, fell in with a German squadron of four cruisers much more powerfully armed than his own. A battleship of an older and slower type, with heavier guns, was on the way to reinforce him; but he attacked at once under every disadvantage. In ten minutes one of his ships was fatally on fire; another, being unarmoured, soon had to leave the line, and in an hour and a half his flagship sank under him. Not a man of her nine hundred was saved.

Here was one of the mysteries of war; and since the Admiral himself was gone, who was to solve it? Who was to tell why he decided to fight under such conditions, what he hoped or expected when he went into action, and what he felt when he saw his squadron crushed by the enemy's fire? Those who undertook to answer these questions in public were divided. Some were of opinion that the action was a fatal blunder, that Cradock was a rash commander who had a better judgment for diplomacy than for war, and made the mistake of despising his enemy. Others declared that he was a worthy successor to Sir Richard Grenville of

the *Revenge*, who tackled fifty-three ships with only one, just to show the Spaniards that an English seaman was not afraid of any odds. On this principle, according to one well-known writer, Cradock really won an important victory, though he lost his only two powerful ships and did little or no harm to the enemy.

I do not pretend to know the truth about this; but when I have told the story of the battle I shall suggest to you that the first of these two opinions, at any rate, is not a right one. Rashness, want of judgment, foolish contempt of his opponent, and ignorance of modern gunnery—these are not possible charges to bring against Cradock, in the opinion of his intimate friends. Even those who knew him more slightly feel them to be impossible too; for he was a notable man and gave in a short time a very strong and lasting impression of his character.

Perhaps, in a few words (which can be read or skipped as you please), I might give a sketch of him from life as he appeared to a chance acquaintance, a guest in the Channel Squadron. The Fleet was lying at anchor one evening off Dover, after some rough weather, and the Admiral was giving a dinner party. The Admiral's Guest was dressing in his cabin when the sound of bugles was heard on the water—this is the magnificent fashion in which an Admiral's arrival is announced at sea. It is a mediæval way of ringing the front door bell, and it fits very well with the life of a modern battleship, which is much like that of a mediæval castle. The Guest was also astonished and delighted with the daily ceremony of dinner in the flagship. In the middle of the banquet the door

opens, and a midshipman enters. He glides round the table to the Flag Captain, who sits in the centre opposite to the Admiral. 'Nine o'clock, Sir,' he says, and glides away again as far as the door, where he stands waiting. The Captain rises with great dignity and bends towards the Admiral. 'It is nine o'clock, Sir.' 'Thank you,' says the Admiral, in a quiet thoughtful tone. The Captain sinks into his seat again, remarking, in an equally quiet but very executive tone, to the midshipman at the door, 'Very good, make it.' The mid is gone like a flash; his feet are heard rattling up the ladder outside, and bang! goes a gun overhead—it seems exactly overhead—driving the Guest's dinner home like a hydraulic rammer. The conversation proceeds. Presently, when the table is cleared and the port placed upon it, an invisible band is suddenly heard playing 'God Save the King,' and every one rises, glass in hand.

After these pleasing ceremonies, the Guest, who had had a memorable conversation with his neighbour (Captain Sturdee, of the *New Zealand*), spent some part of his time with Captain Cradock, of the *Swiftsure*. He spoke of the bugles and the nine o'clock midshipman and the gun and the invisible band, and said he had been surprised by all these things and found them interesting. Captain Cradock asked him why he had been surprised. He answered that it was always surprising to find Englishmen keeping up ceremonies in any practical business, and the Navy was a very practical business. Captain Cradock was down on that like a terrier on a rat. He said that he believed in ceremonies and smartness of all kinds, just because they were so practical. 'What about Drake?' he said,

'Wasn't he an Englishman and a practical seaman? He always kept great state—dined alone and had trumpeters in attendance.' 'Why was that practical?' asked the Guest. 'Because smartness makes pride, and pride is the essence of any Service; men are always happier in a smart ship.'

The Guest thought this over afterwards and saw the justice of it. Free men find service easy when they can take pride in it, and difficult when they cannot. All kinds of small things help, even clothes and polish, as most good commanders have recognised. Cradock was like Drake in this matter, he insisted on smartness in his men, and he kept great state himself. If he had lived in Nelson's time, he would have gilded his ship's figurehead at his own expense, like Sir Peter Parker, and never have allowed a mid on deck except in No. 1 uniform. Another point he was very keen about was 'the courtesy of the sea.' He said the proud were always courteous, the insolent only when they had to be. Even then, years before the war, the German merchantmen seldom saluted the British Fleet in the Channel—perhaps by nature they tend to be, as a French writer has said, 'Toujours insolents, jamais fiers.' In England we are rather afraid of the word Pride. The Guest reminded Captain Cradock of this. 'Very well,' he said, 'let's call it "*decent* pride."'

Then they left talking of pride and turned to gunnery. The Guest had come to the Fleet in the hope of being allowed to study the subject of fire-control, in which he had been interested for many years. This is a subject upon which it is not lawful to write nowadays; so it must be enough to say that Cradock not only

knew the main principles of gunnery from A to Z, but was full of dodges, tips and tweaks of all kinds, founded on his own observation in practice. The Guest, who had been a practical rifle-shot himself, enjoyed hearing his quick vivacious remarks. But what interested him most, and is most to the point now, was Cradock's 'theory of gunnery.' He had already suggested it in his book called 'Whispers from the Fleet,' and there can be no fear of the censor if I quote from that. 'The whole question of the "Gunnery might of the ship" depends on three things: firstly, Control; secondly, Accuracy; thirdly, the Personal Element. The first is no good without the second, and both are useless if the third is unsatisfactory—by which I mean that (good as the officers and men assuredly are) the condition of temperament is not half enough studied in the Quarter Bill.'

The Guest asked him how far he thought the English temperament would give us an advantage in action against men of more excitable nations. Cradock answered that it might give us a great advantage; but it was of no use to count on that—it must be put aside, with hopes that, in a pinch, something might come of it. 'Pick your gun-layers, but make them keep their hands on the guns.' He had practised what he preached, for he told the Guest how he had had a new crew trained some years before. First, all the men fired in turn, three runs of ten rounds each, with aiming tubes. The eight best men were then put through the course again, and the highest scorers were again selected and made regular gun-layers. Whenever they practised, their scores were kept, and added on continuously. It was found in the end that the order

of merit was the same throughout—the same man had the highest single score and the highest aggregate score. The ship took a high place in the Fleet competition. This conversation was in itself enough to convince the Guest that Cradock had really thought about gunnery and was not in the least likely to mistake the 'gunnery might' of his own ships, or to underestimate that of his enemy.

By this time it was close upon 10.30, and the party was breaking up. The Guest and Cradock went up on deck, and while the Admirals' barges were coming alongside and getting away they stood looking down the long triple line of the Fleet. The Flagship headed the centre line of the three. Level with her on one side was the *Good Hope*, and on the other side the *King Edward VII.* A little further down the line to port was the *Irresistible*, and further still were the *Triumph* and the *Swiftsure*, easily distinguished by the curious arch formed by their derricks. Beyond them again lay the *New Zealand*, in which the Guest was to visit Captain Sturdee next day. It was a warm starlight night and the array of the great shadowy monsters sleeping upon the water was a fascinating thing to see. The Guest wondered what the fate of these ships would be; whether 'The Day' would be staved off till they had all become obsolete and sent to do guard 'on the mud,' or to be sold and scrapped, or whether any of them were destined to try their guns and armour against the enemy. His eyes were fixed on the huge length and four black funnels of the *Good Hope*, to him the most familiar of all, for she was always day and night exactly opposite his cabin port hole. 'I wonder what *she* will do,' he said, 'she's

the first of her name.' 'Well,' said Cradock, 'she ought to do something, if there's anything in names.'

2. The Battle of Coronel

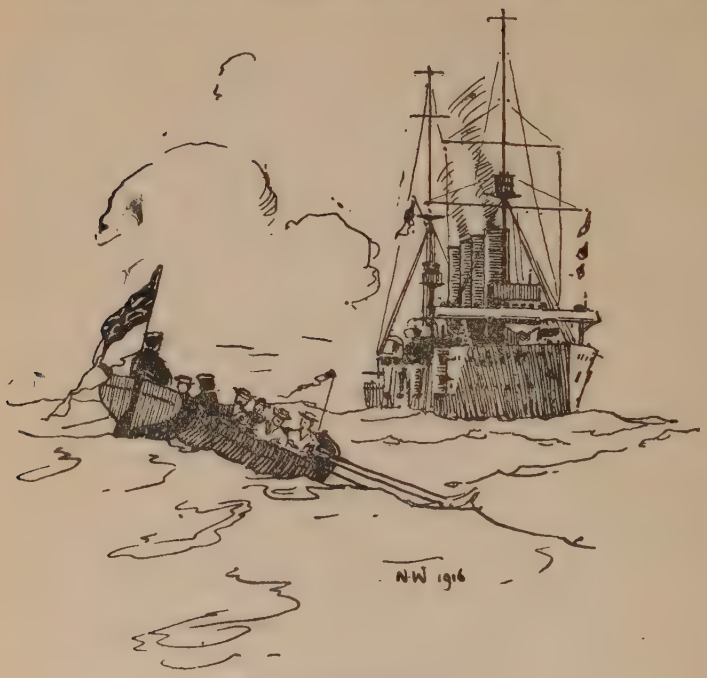
On the outbreak of war in August 1914, there were a number of German cruisers in the Atlantic. Their object was to intercept and destroy British merchantmen on the trade routes. There were also, of course, a larger number of British cruisers, whose business it was to protect our trade and destroy the enemy. But the sea is a very large hunting-ground, with room for a good deal of dodging and damaging before the inevitable end comes, and the Germans had been preparing their plans for a long time. They had a fleet in the China seas, from which reinforcements could be sent; and we could reinforce from home. There we had much the best of it, but our Empire is widely scattered all about the world, and the Admiralty had to take care to divide their forces to the best advantage. Our job was therefore a more difficult one than the enemy's, and the result was that they began with a success and were only knocked out in the second round.

I think you will find it interesting to follow the moves in this game, as well as the actual fighting in the two battles. Our plan of campaign was roughly this: Admiral Cradock was to be reinforced from home by a cruiser of a more powerful type than those of his squadron, then he was to sweep southwards down the whole of the South American coast, and finally to pass through Magellan's Straits and sweep up the Chilian coast of the Pacific. His difficulty was that he could not tell whether his enemy would be

working as single commerce-raiders or as a united squadron. It was important that he should find them quickly, and for that purpose he had to spread his ships out and take the risk of the enemy getting together and falling upon them while they were separated.

On August 2, he was in Kingston harbour, Jamaica, flying his flag in the *Suffolk*, a cruiser of 9,800 tons. She was bigger than anything the Germans then had in the Atlantic, but not so big as some of their China Fleet, and the Admiralty ordered out the *Good Hope*, a cruiser of 14,100 tons with 9·2 guns, then off the coast of Ireland. The *Good Hope* at once crossed the Atlantic, sweeping the trade route as she went. The *Suffolk* sailed north from Jamaica to meet her, and on her way, in the evening of August 6, she fell in with a German light cruiser, the *Karlsruhe* of 4,820 tons. The *Karlsruhe* made off, but the Admiral signalled by wireless to the *Bristol*, a 4,800 ton light cruiser out on his right, to engage her, and soon had the pleasure of hearing that the *Bristol* was at it hammer and tongs. It was almost dark by the time the fight began; but the *Bristol* kept it up well for just an hour, and was hoping to hold the enemy till the *Suffolk* could cut her off. Admiral Cradock signalled 'Stick to it, I am coming,' but at 9.10 the *Suffolk* had the disappointment of seeing the *Karlsruhe* using her superior speed to draw away out of action. She was probably wise in doing so, for she had not succeeded in once hitting the *Bristol*, and she must have known that there were other English cruisers in those parts. In fact she boasted that she had been attacked by four at once, which was untrue. Admiral Cradock then ordered the *Bristol* to St. Lucia and went on north in the *Suffolk*,

until he met the *Good Hope* at sea. He went on board her at once, hoisted his flag, and turned south again. On August 23 he touched at St. Lucia, and found the



'He went on board at once.'

Bristol at the rendezvous. On the 25th the two ships sailed, to show the flag among the islands, and they rendezvoused again at Port of Spain, where they were joined by the *Berwick*. On the 28th all three ships went south together, the Admiral in the centre with the *Bristol* to starboard and the *Berwick* to port. The distance between each was forty miles, so that they

were sweeping the whole coast of South America on a line about one hundred miles broad. The *Bristol*, having the inshore station, had to search the harbours; in the Amazon she met the *Cornwall*, and off Montevideo she passed the *Glasgow*, who was on her way to join the flagship. She herself was then ordered north again. The Admiral passed on southwards, and was joined first by the *Monmouth*, then by the *Glasgow*, and finally by the *Otranto*, an auxiliary cruiser—that is, an armed liner. With these three ships and the *Good Hope* he steered for the Straits of Magellan in search of three German cruisers, the *Leipzig*, *Dresden*, and *Nürnberg*, who were reported to have concentrated in this direction.

These three German ships were all light cruisers of 3,200 to 3,600 tons with only 4-inch guns, and Cradock could deal with them easily. But he knew that there were more powerful enemy ships in the Pacific, and he asked to be given something to meet them with in case of need. The Admiralty decided to reinforce him with the *Canopus*, a battleship of an old type but armed with four 12-inch guns. She was no doubt slow, and that was a serious disadvantage, because a squadron cannot go faster than the speed of its slowest ship. It was Cradock who was hunting the enemy, and if they chose to keep running he might be compelled to go so far ahead of his 'lame duck' that she would be of no use to him. On the other hand there were the big guns, if only they could be brought into action. The light cruisers on both sides might almost be left out of the reckoning—their lack of armour and the ineffectiveness of their 4-inch guns made them quite unfit to lie in the line of battle against

armoured cruisers with 6-inch guns. Cradock, with the 6-inch guns of the *Monmouth* and the 9·2 guns of the *Good Hope*, was therefore certain of being an over-match for the enemy's light cruisers; and this again made it certain that Admiral von Spee would reinforce them from China. The only help he could bring would be his armoured cruisers with their 8·2 guns—the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* had each eight of these guns, and they were of a more modern type than the 9·2's of the *Good Hope*, though not firing so heavy a shot. Moreover, these were fast ships, and could therefore choose their own time for fighting, and keep the range which suited them best.

Now you can see the position. When Cradock passed through the Straits of Magellan and turned north for the Chilian coast, he knew that he had in front of him a force of three ships, much inferior to his own, but sure to be reinforced sooner or later by two powerful ships which could throw far heavier salvoes than his own squadron and out-range him too. As a set-off to these, there was the old *Canopus* coming along behind him. The really important question, which could not be answered till the decisive moment came, was the question whether the enemy could be caught before their two forces had joined; and, if they had already joined, whether the *Canopus* could be got up in time to take part in the action. It must have been a time of great suspense for our men as they steamed north, exploring the rocky bays of Tierra del Fuego, and now and then picking up wireless messages from the enemy's ships and secret installations on land. They longed to see the smoke streamers on the horizon, but they hoped there would be only three

of them first and then two or three more another day. They would have given a good deal to know what we know now; for we can picture to ourselves the whole map of the world at once, and see what movements

'Exploring the rocky bays of Tierra del Fuego.'

the enemy were making while the British Admiral was carrying out his orders to seek them out and attack them.

Admiral von Spee had begun by sending off the *Emden* and *Königsberg* as detached commerce-destroyers —they had gone west and south into the Indian seas. Then he had sent the *Leipzig* and *Nürnberg* eastwards to the Chilian coast where the *Dresden* joined them, while he himself with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*

kept out among the islands of Polynesia, avoiding the risk of meeting a Japanese squadron and ready to come to the assistance of his light cruisers when necessary. On September 14, when Cradock was off the coast of Brazil, von Spee was at Samoa. On the 22nd, when the *Glasgow* was leaving Montevideo to join the *Good Hope*, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were bombarding Papeete in the island of Tahiti, and sinking a dismantled French gunboat. Finally, while Cradock was making good the Atlantic coast and coaling at the Falklands, von Spee ran across towards Valparaiso, and picked up not only his three light cruisers but several colliers which they had procured from German shipping firms in Chili. This method of coaling was, of course, an abuse of Chilian hospitality and contrary to international law, but only what was to be expected from a German Admiral under the necessity of 'hacking a way through.' It was not a cruel act, like the sinking of liners or hospital ships: and perhaps in future we shall realise that it is worse than useless to make many rules for the conduct of war, because they only give an extra advantage to the side which is unscrupulous enough to break them.

The two squadrons were now drawing near to one another, and it would be very interesting if we could know what the opposing Admirals thought of their chances. Cradock knew by this time that the two big cruisers were somewhere about, as well as the three he was hunting: but he could not tell for certain whether he would find them all together. Von Spee knew that the *Good Hope* was out, but it is not likely that he had heard anything of the *Canopus*. He probably felt confident, for he had sixteen big

guns to the *Good Hope's* two, and his gun-layers were among the best of the German navy—the *Scharnhorst* had actually won the gold medal for shooting.

Cradock, on the other hand, had thirty-two 6-inch guns in his squadron as against twelve in the big German ships and none in the light cruisers. If these could be reckoned as being in the same class with the 8-inch, he had thirty-four guns to twenty-eight; but his ships were not so well armoured. There was also the *Canopus*. I do not know what he thought about her; but it is certain that his intention was to fight, with her or without her, for that was the business on which he was sent. He had asked for reinforcements, and the Admiralty had sent him what they thought sufficient. It was not for him to hold back after that.

The British Admiral's furthest point north was Valparaiso, where he picked up his mail on October 27, He must have passed very near to the enemy, who were coming south at this moment. From Valparaiso he also turned south again, and coaled at sea off Conception. He then ordered Captain Luce of the *Glasgow* to run into Coronel, a little further south, and send off a cable message—the squadron to await his return. The *Glasgow* despatched the cable and left Coronel again at 9 o'clock A.M. on November 1, steaming north to the appointed rendezvous. At 2 o'clock P.M. she received a signal from the flagship—an enemy ship had been seen to northward, and the squadron were to spread N.E. by E. in the following order: *Good Hope, Monmouth, Otranto, Glasgow*—speed to be worked up to fifteen knots. It seemed possible that they had found the enemy scattered after all.

But at 4.20 the *Glasgow* discovered that this was

not so. She saw smoke on the horizon and soon made out three ships, two of which turned out to be armoured cruisers. A fourth was then seen, and the *Glasgow* began to close upon her next ship, at the same time signalling by wireless to the *Good Hope*, who was furthest away to the north. By 5 o'clock P.M. the three smaller ships had concentrated and the *Good Hope* came in sight.

We know what some of the squadron felt when they sighted, not the light cruisers they were hunting but the two big ships as well. One of the crew of the *Otranto* wrote afterwards: 'Imagine our horror when we saw that we had to fight the latest ships of the German Navy, equivalent to our Dreadnoughts, and our two best ships about equal to one of the Germans. But there is no such thing as a retirement on the ocean, so that it meant we had to fight a hopeless battle.' This was perhaps not a typical naval opinion; the men in the *Otranto* took a rather exaggerated view of the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, which were in no way 'equivalent to our Dreadnoughts.' In the *Good Hope* they would know better than that, and I doubt if any there regarded it as an entirely 'hopeless battle.' If the Admiral had any feeling of the sort, we may be certain he let no one else see a sign of it. On the contrary he gave his orders in the most confident manner, and prepared to make the best of the situation.

The *Good Hope* came south and took the head of the British line. The other ships formed upon her, in line ahead, in the order *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, *Otranto*. This was at 5.47, and the enemy, who had turned south, also formed line ahead, the two big ships leading.

Having the superior speed, they succeeded in getting and keeping the inshore station. Cradock had been manœuvring to secure that position himself, no doubt foreseeing that when the sun set it would be a great advantage to have the enemy against the light.

When he found that he was unable to choose the best station, he determined to fight at once. An action at sea with modern guns may take a very short time; sometimes only a few minutes will put the result beyond doubt. Cradock probably hoped that he might get some good shots in before the light was bad enough to give the enemy a decided advantage. At 6.18 he ordered speed to be increased to seventeen knots and signalled to the *Canopus*, 'I am going to attack enemy now.' The *Canopus* was at that moment nearly two hundred miles away, but we can imagine several reasons for this signal. The Admiral may have intended the Germans to overhear his message and think that a powerful reinforcement was at hand: in any case he wanted the *Canopus* to come on at her best speed, and to know what she might expect to find. At the pace at which she could steam north, and the squadron south, they would join forces in something under six hours, so that unless von Spee could beat Cradock before dark he might find the position reversed by next morning. He certainly heard the signal to the *Canopus*, for he immediately set his own wireless to work jamming the British.

The sea was now very rough, the wind getting up, the sky overcast except on the horizon, where the sun was setting in a golden blaze. The light was directly in the eyes of the German gun-layers, and at this moment Cradock would have had his chance if

only he could have closed to firing range. But von Spee knew his danger and kept away to 15,000 yards until the sun had set.

Then—it was at 6.55 P.M.—the conditions were suddenly and completely changed. The moment the sun went down the German ships became difficult to see, and as the light faded they almost disappeared against the dark background of the coast line. On the other hand there was a golden afterglow in the west, no longer dazzling to the German gunners, but bright enough to show up the silhouettes of the British ships.

By 7.3 the enemy had closed to 12,000 yards: his time had come and he opened fire with salvoes from his whole line. *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, and *Glasgow* replied instantly, each engaging her opposite number. *Otranto* had no guns that would carry the distance, and she was in great danger. Happily the shooting of the German light cruisers was not good enough. The first salvo fell in front of her, the second over her, the third short of her, the fourth and fifth over her, the sixth astern, the seventh short. Seldom has a ship ever run the gauntlet so pluckily and so successfully. But it was time to be out of it, and she hauled out of the line to port.

The *Glasgow* then had to tackle the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden* alone, and she also had good fortune equal to her courage. About six hundred shells were fired at her, but of these only five struck her. They were all near the water line, but three were stopped by coal, a fourth wrecked the Captain's pantry and cabin without causing a fire, and the fifth, which got through beneath the deck, failed to explode. She herself could

"THE GLASGOW THEN HAD TO TACKLE THE NURNBERG AND DRESDEN ALONE"

not hope to do much damage: she had ten 4-inch guns to her enemies' twenty, and of her two 6-inch guns one was kept going continuously, but it was too dark to see results.

Meantime the decisive fight between the big ships was going heavily against us. Cradock had only two guns that could penetrate the armour of the *Scharnhorst* or *Gneisenau*; and it must have been very difficult to do anything with these, for within five minutes of opening fire the enemy's third salvo set both *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* ablaze forward, and the fires were never got under. Good shooting is the deadliest of weapons; it not only damages your enemy but forms your best protection, for it prevents him from hitting you, or at the least diminishes the speed and accuracy of his fire. In target practice you shoot steadily, for the target can do nothing to disturb you; in action, the man who gets in the first hits goes some way towards reducing his adversary to the condition of a target. Cradock knew this as well as anyone, and when he found the light failing him, and giving all the advantage to the enemy, he must have foreseen that nothing but a miracle could save him. When his ships caught fire and one of his two 9·2 guns was knocked out, he could only have expected the fight to go more and more fatally against him. In half an hour the *Good Hope* had become a target. Then at 7.50 a magnificent and appalling sight was seen, a sight unparalleled since the French Admiral's flagship *L'Orient* blew up in the battle of the Nile. The flames on the *Good Hope* suddenly leapt to a height of 200 feet and a tremendous explosion was heard. A magazine had blown up amidships. 'Total destruction must have followed,'

says Captain Luce of the *Glasgow*. Of Cradock and his nine hundred men not a sign was ever seen again.

It was now quite dark, but both sides kept up the fight—they fired at the flashes of each other's

'Down by the head and apparently unmanageable.'

guns, probably without any effect. But the gallant *Monmouth* was already done; she was heavily down by the bow, and in great danger of being swamped. She signalled to *Glasgow* that she was turning to get her stern to the heavy sea, but she was no longer visible.

At 8.30 *Glasgow* signalled to her 'Enemy following us,' but no reply came back.

The moon was now rising and the *Monmouth* became visible again. She was steaming N.E. down by the head and apparently unmanageable. The enemy were also visible, the flagship signalling to the others by flashlight, and all of them advancing upon the *Monmouth*. Captain Luce had now to consider the question of his duty as Commander-in-Chief, for he was senior to Captain Brandt. He was still in a position to get the *Glasgow* away, if he left the *Monmouth* to end her fight alone. It was a heart-rending chance to take, but he knew that it was imperatively necessary to warn the *Canopus*, who was running straight towards a second disaster, and he knew also that he could do no good by staying to the end. The *Glasgow* was practically unarmoured and must inevitably go down with her consort. Captain Luce did his duty; he made off N.W. into the darkness, intending to turn south as soon as he was out of sight. The *Monmouth's* men were all crowded on her quarter-deck. They cheered the *Glasgow* as she went away, and for those cheers alone they deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance.

At 8.50 the *Glasgow* was out of sight of the enemy, but not far enough away to escape the most distressing scene of all. At 9.20 firing began again; it could not come from the dying ship, and it continued until seventy-five flashes had been counted. 'No doubt,' says Captain Luce, 'the final attack on *Monmouth*.' It is said that the flashes were all from the *Nürnberg*, which had had less to do in the action than the others, and therefore could better spare the ammunition for

a firing party. It is said also that a searchlight was seen when all was over, playing no doubt upon the sinking ship to make certain of her fate. No attempt was made to pick up any of her drowning men. But perhaps German seamanship was not equal to this task—it was a rough night.

3. The Great Ocean Secret

The Battle of Coronel was fought on November 1, 1914; it was not until November 5 that the first news of it was given to the public by the evening newspapers. The account was not official; it came from correspondents in Chili, and was difficult to follow. Two British ships appeared to have been sunk; but one of them, the *Good Hope*, was also reported to have been last seen making for the coast, and it was thought that although on fire and out of action she might have succeeded in escaping or running ashore. Seeing that the information had been gathered only from the crews of some German ships which had put into Valparaiso, the Admiralty thought it necessary to warn the public against accepting the story too readily; and an official note was issued, pointing out that 'the battleship *Canopus*, which had been specially sent to strengthen Admiral Cradock's squadron, and would give him a decided superiority, is not mentioned, and further, although five German ships are concentrated in Chilian waters, only three have come into Valparaiso harbour. It is possible, therefore, that when full accounts of the action are received, they may considerably modify the German version.'

So we hoped, but we hoped vainly. Letters came home from the *Glasgow* and *Otranto*; on November 17,

the Admiralty published a full report from Captain Luce of the *Glasgow*, and we knew the worst. There was no excitement, no weakening under the blow. It was grievous to lose a first-rate Admiral and 1,600 men; but they had splendidly kept the tradition of the Navy, and no one doubted that the account would soon be paid. The English national spirit is not a thing of yesterday, nor is it a carefully manufactured state of mind, produced by the labour of drill-sergeants and professors. It is a natural instinct which has, in time past, enabled us to stand up against many defeats, and to hold on until the time came for a decisive blow. A witty Frenchman has said that in each of their wars the English have generally won only a single battle, but that battle has always been the last one. The saying is not literally true, but there is much truth in it. Victories at the beginning conquer the weak: they do not conquer the stubborn. Those who can take punishment, and go on, win the victories at the end, which are much more important. There is a good story of an American envoy to Berlin in the present year of the War. When the German Chancellor said to him, 'The English have yet to learn the meaning of one word—the word *strafe*,' he replied, 'The Germans have yet to learn the meaning of the word *stubborn*, and the English will teach it them.'

So the defeat of Coronel was received with stubbornness, as the equally heavy loss of the *Hogue*, *Aboukir*, and *Cressy* had been. This time we had some well-timed successes to help us; not only did we hear, on the very day of the bad news from Chili, that the German cruiser *Yorck* had struck a mine and sunk on November 2, but, on November 10, the evening papers

announced the defeat and capture of the *Emden* in single fight with the Australian cruiser *Sydney*, and the imprisonment of the *Königsberg* in a river on the East Coast of Africa, where she was afterwards bombarded and destroyed. And besides these fortunate events there was also the coincidence that only twenty-four hours before the battle of Coronel, Lord Fisher had once more been appointed First Sea Lord. He had a reputation for energy: confidence was felt that his energy would all be exerted to reverse the position in the Pacific, and the public was content to wait.

But though the inhabitants of the British Isles could afford to wait without anxiety, the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands could not. At first we did not realise this; in fact very few people in this country knew anything about the Falklands. Yet they are an old possession of the Empire, an important station for the Navy, and they have a history of their own. Of this history one fact only is remembered by ordinary people. In the year 1770, the islands were forcibly claimed by Spain, and war seemed inevitable. A British squadron was prepared to go out and assert our rights; it included the battleship *Raisonable*, commanded by Captain Maurice Suckling, who had made his reputation in the *Dreadnought*. Now, when he was commissioning the *Raisonable*, he had the usual Captain's privilege of taking a number of young gentlemen to sea with him as probationary midshipmen, and he offered a place among them to a nephew of his own. The name of this nephew was Horatio Nelson, and though the war scare came to nothing and the squadron never went out, it is the fact that

the direct cause of Nelson's going into the Navy was the necessity of holding the Falklands.

We know a little more about these islands now. Mr. Neville Hilditch tells us[1] that there are in the group two large islands and about one hundred islets, rocks and sand-banks, strewn with masses of giant sea-weed and the fragments of many wrecks. The population consists of about 2,000, mostly Scottish shepherds, but the penguins are so much more numerous that the Governor is nicknamed 'King of the Penguins.' Mr. John Buchan[2] describes the islands—with their bare brown moors shining with quartz, their endless lochans, their prevailing mists, and their grey stone houses—as looking like a group of the Orkneys or Outer Hebrides set down in the Southern Seas. Mr. William Buchan, leading signalman of the *Bristol*, says[3] that at the capital, Port Stanley, there are two harbours, an inner one called Stanley Harbour, and an outer one called Port William, which is larger and quite admirable. Both are sheltered from the incessant winds, and the little town lies at one end of the inner harbour, 'looking like a collection of dolls' houses.' It contains the Governor's house, with the only tree on the island, the cathedral, the wireless station, and about nine hundred and fifty inhabitants, being nearly one half of the whole population—the other half are out on the moors.

After the battle of Coronel, these islands—with their splendid harbour, their coal, and their wireless station—were evidently in great danger from the victorious German squadron. The *Canopus* and *Glasgow*, who

[1] *Battle Sketches*, 1914–15 (Oxford University Press).
[2] *Nelson's History of the War*, vol. iv.
[3] *Log of H.M.S. Bristol* (Westminster Press).

sent them the bad news on November 4, ran into the harbour four days later, but received a wireless order to leave the same day for Rio de Janeiro, in order that the *Glasgow* might be docked and repaired. So the islands were for a few days defenceless, and everyone made preparations for abandoning the town and taking refuge on the moors. Probably the 'King of the Penguins' (whose real name is the Hon. William Allardyce, C.M.G.) sent word to the Admiralty of the Colony's anxiety to be given a chance of putting up a fight. At any rate the *Canopus*, when within two days of Rio, was ordered to return to the Falklands. Back she came, fully expecting to find the Germans already there. But von Spee was not yet ready; either he had to repair some of his ships, or he spent time in coaling, and in the interval Port Stanley was reoccupied and fortified in the most spirited fashion by the inhabitants, and the officers and men of the *Canopus*. The smaller guns of the battleship were landed and mounted in good positions ashore; the good old ship herself was evidently not fast enough or strong enough to fight the whole German squadron at sea, so it was decided to turn her into a fort. She was taken into the inner harbour and there anchored fast on a mud-bank, under the narrow strip of land which divides the harbour from the sea. This strip or ridge was high enough to give her a good parapet to fire over; and to make her a still more difficult target for the enemy's guns, she was repainted in what Mr. William Buchan describes as 'futurist colours.' This gave her all the chance her men could expect—it was a five-to-one chance, but a very sporting one; and if the big guns of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had

failed to get on to her at once there is no saying how much damage her 12-inch shells might not have done.

'Was repainted in . . . futurist colours.'

As things turned out, she had very little shooting to do; but she was a useful decoy duck, as you will see presently.

We must leave her there and go back to England

now, to try and get behind the scenes at the Admiralty, where preparations were being made for a stroke as brilliant and unexpected as any in our naval history. I have told you how, by a strange coincidence, Lord Fisher had come back to the Admiralty the day before the defeat of Coronel. He knew instantly what was the right weapon to strike back with, for he himself had designed and made it. What was needed was a force that could treat von Spee as he had treated Cradock—that is, reach him unexpectedly, out-pace him, and out-range him with a heavier broadside. It was for just such work as this that the Invincibles—the first great cruisers of the new Dreadnought fleet—were intended. They were so powerful (though lacking in defence) that it was often said they were fit to lie in the line of battle with the real Dreadnoughts. But this would have been wasting them, for we had already plenty of battleships, and the superior speed of the Invincibles could not have been used in the line. Their real purpose was a long swift rush—a leap of incredible speed and power—and this was their first real chance.

A good story is told about the Invincibles; it may be only a legend, but if true it explains why we are so far ahead of the Germans in cruisers of this type. When these ships were first designed, Sir John Fisher knew how important it was to get as long a start as possible in building them; for Admiral von Tirpitz, who never had any new ideas of his own, was always most prompt in copying ours. The German Admiralty paid highly for secret information about our building programme; and as this could not be helped, the only thing to do was to take care that the information

they bought should be false. The size of the ships' guns was one of the newest and most important points about them. Sir John Fisher gave his order to the usual firm at the usual time—the guns he ordered were 9·2's. About the same time another firm received an order for a number of 12-inch guns from the Sultan of Turkey; this order was to be a profound secret, and the correspondence about it was kept locked up in a special safe at the works. In due course, as Sir John had foreseen, the safe was burgled and the order reported to Berlin. The German Government, having discovered this secret, inquired of the Sultan what he wanted 12-inch guns for. He replied that he knew nothing about any such guns. The Germans thought this was Oriental wiliness, and the oftener he repeated his denial the more they disbelieved him. So when the 12-inch guns were mounted in the Invincibles, the Germans found themselves completely out-classed; for their own new cruiser, the *Blücher*, was armed with nothing better than 8·2 guns and could only do twenty-four knots. The Invincibles could do twenty-six or more, if pressed.

These, then, were the ships chosen to hunt down von Spee—the *Invincible* herself and her next sister, the *Inflexible*. They were beyond doubt stronger than their enemies—they had 7-inch armour and their whole battery of eight 12-inch guns could be fired on either side. But to catch and destroy a squadron of five, more than two ships were needed. The others selected were the *Carnarvon*, an armed cruiser of nearly 11,000 tons, carrying four 7½-inch guns, and six 6-inch; and the *Kent* and *Cornwall*, cruisers of nearly 10,000 tons, with fourteen 6-inch guns each.

Who was to command the expedition? That question was probably not for a moment in doubt. It was evident that if anyone was ever to be criticised for what had happened at Coronel, it would be those officers at the Admiralty who had advised on the reinforcements to be sent out to Sir Christopher Cradock. The chief of these was Rear-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, who had been Chief of the Staff in the Channel Squadron when Cradock was Captain of the *Swiftsure*, as you have already heard. Now, as Admiral Sturdee might some day be held partly responsible for Cradock's fate, it was only reasonable that he should be given the chance to 'clean-up' the situation himself. Lord Fisher saw this with his usual clearness of vision, and no doubt made the offer with his usual clearness of speech. Sir Doveton Sturdee, of course, accepted it with the utmost alacrity, and the necessary orders were given at once, perhaps before the public even knew of the disaster. It is said that the dockyard officials asked for two more days in which to get the ships ready, and that the First Sea Lord replied instantly that they must and would sail on the day named, ready or not ready. If this is true, it was one of the links in a chain of extraordinary good fortune. In a long affair of this kind it is impossible to make exact calculations, and there had to be many delays on both sides before the fight actually came off—Admiral von Spee, for example, took five weeks in reaching Port Stanley from Coronel. So that I say Admiral Sturdee had extraordinary good fortune in his voyage: and he himself would go still further. Those who make a great effort in a great cause often feel that they are helped by a power beyond themselves. Admiral Sturdee did all

that man can do: but he believes that his victory was made inevitable by something greater than man.

The exact date on which Admiral Sturdee sailed has never been officially made known. The expedition was so successfully kept secret that not only the British public, but also the German Admiralty, were in complete ignorance of it. They must have expected a second squadron and one stronger than the first, to be sent against von Spee; but they certainly had no idea that it would include battle-cruisers detached from the Grand Fleet for this special purpose. And von Spee himself believed that whatever might happen in the long run, for the present he was safe and had the Falklands at his mercy. Our Admiralty expected that he would make for the islands, for the sake of the coal and the wireless station there; but it is said that in order to be quite sure of catching him without a long chase, a plan was devised for drawing him to the spot in time to meet Admiral Sturdee. The plan was this: a wireless message was sent to the Captain of the *Canopus*, ordering him to return to Port Stanley, and telling him that he would be quite safe in doing this, as the forts there had been armed with new guns. The message was, of course, taken in and read off by the Germans, who believed it to be a piece of false information (which it was) intended to bluff them out of going to the Falklands (which was just the opposite of what it was intended to do). They informed von Spee accordingly, and on November 15, having finished his coaling or refitting, he started down the coast of Chili for the Straits of Magellan or Cape Horn.

On that same day the British squadron was beginning to rendezvous at a certain place on the other

side of South America, and within a few days afterwards the two great battle-cruisers arrived, the *Invincible* flying the flag of Admiral Sturdee. They coaled at once; and then, says Mr. William Buchan, 'a systematic search was commenced southwards. The squadron, consisting of seven ships, spread out to extreme visual signalling distance, which reduced the use of wireless to a minimum, a valuable asset in our search.' This last remark gives us a hint of the skill with which Admiral Sturdee had managed his long and secret run out. He had already brought the Invincibles 5,000 miles without betraying their existence to any wireless station on ship or shore; he had nearly 2,500 miles more to cover, and he was determined not to let von Spee get wind of him till it was too late to escape.

The last week of the voyage was one of great suspense; both fleets knew that they were heading for a fight. With a map, and a little imagination, it is possible to see the whole thing; on the one side of South America the five German cruisers, with their two colliers, running in close formation down the coast of Patagonia, their commanders licking their lips over the ships they had sunk and the islands they meant to capture; on the other side of the ever narrowing continent, the British squadron flung out in a wide irresistible line, netting the South Atlantic from the coast to a distance of over two hundred miles out to sea. Every day, as we watch them, the two fleets fail to sight each other; but every day they draw nearer to one another—nearer, that is, to a battle which only one of them can survive. And there lie the Falklands; there lies poor little Port Stanley with her wireless station and her dolls' houses and her Scottish shepherds, and the gallant

old *Canopus* in fancy dress upon her mud-bank. There

'Saved from the Huns by a single day.'

was no flinching there; they had no doubt there would be a British victory, some day and somewhere. But it would make all the difference in the world to them

whether the German or the British Admiral reached them first.

On the morning of December 7, they saw smoke streamers on the northern horizon. They were still in suspense, for von Spee might possibly be doubling back that way. An hour later the Invincibles were running into Port Stanley. The Falklands were saved from the Huns—by a single day.

4. The Battle of the Falklands

On the night of December 9, a crowded house had been listening to Thomas Hardy's gigantic historical drama, 'The Dynasts.' The play filled their minds with heroic memories, and when the curtain fell it seemed an unwelcome change to leave the great battle-fields of the past for the cold and dark streets of to-day. The audience came out on to the steps of the theatre to find themselves faced by a driving storm of rain; there was the usual block in the entrance and the usual confused clamouring for cars. A couple of lads, with their coat collars turned up, were offering half-soaked copies of the latest evening paper. Few stayed to buy them, but those who did forgot instantly the play and the rain and the dark street. At the bottom of the 'Stop Press' column was the news that three German cruisers, the *Scharnhorst*, the *Gneisenau*, and the *Leipzig*, had been sunk in a naval action. And not only was this confirmed next day but the *Nürnberg* was officially added to the list.

In Berlin, or in the London of a hundred years ago, there would have been flags and illuminations for such a victory. But for us this war is too serious a business for shouting; we are not out for glory, but for

the safety of civilisation, and the end, if it is to be the only right end, must be grim rather than joyful. So there was only a sober satisfaction over the clearing of the Pacific and Atlantic—satisfaction and curiosity, for no one could imagine at first by what means such a blow could have been struck. When the full accounts came home, in the shape of despatches from Admiral Sturdee and letters from officers of his squadron, the curiosity was at an end, but the satisfaction was increased. The expedition had been carried through by a combination of admirable tactics and extraordinary good luck: and, unreasonable though it may be, good luck generally rouses more enthusiasm even than good tactics.

This battle is not a difficult one to imagine. We have excellent materials from which to put the picture together—the Admiral's despatches, the log of the *Bristol*, letters from a midshipman in the *Invincible*, from the Commander of the *Kent*, from an officer of the *Cornwall*, and from another midshipman in the *Carnarvon*. Some additional details have been also furnished by the lower deck, especially by a signalman in the *Kent*, who was an excellent witness. He was stationed throughout the action behind an iron shield in the fore part of the ship, and in telling his story afterwards he was careful to distinguish between what he had seen himself and what he had picked up from the talk of others on board.

First, then, we can look into Port Stanley once more, and see Admiral Sturdee's squadron arriving there on December 7, to everyone's great satisfaction. The enemy had been outwitted, the Falklands were safe, and a victory was only a matter of time. The Admiral

at once sent the *Bristol* and *Glasgow* into the inner harbour, where they saw with amusement the *Canopus* disguised as a fort. The rest of the squadron anchored in the outer harbour, Port William, and coaling began immediately. There were only three colliers available; so the ships could not all coal at once, but it was necessary to be as quick as possible about it. In the end, after working hard all night some were still short of their intended amount, and among them were both the Invincibles. Happily they had been built to burn oil as well as coal, and their oil supply was untouched. *Kent* and *Carnarvon* got their full coal supply; they also got a stiffening word or two from the colliers' men, who told them how they had coaled Cradock's gallant ships only a few weeks before.

The work was still going on at 8 o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, December 8, when the Admiral, shaving quietly in his cabin, received a message from the signal station. Two strange ships had been seen from Sapper's Hill, a post two miles away. The flag lieutenant who brought the news had not stayed to dress ceremoniously—he was, in fact, in night uniform. 'Well,' said the Admiral 'you had better go and get dressed; we'll see about it later.' But he gave an order immediately, and the squadron guessed that something was about to happen when they saw the *Kent* pass down the harbour and take station outside with the guard-ship—the armed liner *Macedonia*. The excitement was great; in every ship men might be seen climbing the masts to spy what could be spied, and there was universal joy when two or three more smoke streamers became visible, and all were recognised as enemies.

By this time the Admiral had given further orders. The three ships who were still coaling had cast off their colliers, and all were raising steam as fast as possible. The two battle-cruisers used their oil fuel to do this. They had only been able to begin coaling at 6 o'clock, but it was not saving coal that was their object now. They used oil because raising steam with oil means pouring forth a dense cloud of thick black smoke, and the Admiral wished by this means to conceal his two biggest ships from the enemy as long as possible. He was successful in this, and von Spee came on steadily towards the last and greatest surprise of his life.

At 8.47 the first two ships were reported to be about 14,000 yards off, and the others about double that distance. At 9.20, while the British ships were preparing for sea, and doing a very hasty wash down, the *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg* approached to shell the wireless station. Their guns were ready trained upon it, when the *Canopus* opened fire upon them from her 12-inch guns at 11,000 yards. She fired four shots, and accounts vary as to their effect. One report claims a hit, others say that the shells fell short or between the two enemy ships. But all agree that the shooting was creditable, for it was done by indirect fire over the low ridge of land which hid the *Canopus* from the sea. The enemy apparently decided to concentrate before risking anything more. Their two ships hoisted German colours and turned away. From the upper bridge of the *Invincible* Admiral Sturdee got a glimpse of their masts and smoke; they seemed to him to be then going away at a range of approximately 17,000 yards.

A few minutes later they appeared to think better

of it: they altered course to port as though they meant to come round and attack the *Kent* at the entrance of the harbour. Probably von Spee was signalling to them to do so, and assuring them that he was coming along to back them up. Certainly they were quite confident, and at 9.40, when the *Glasgow* weighed and came down the harbour to join the *Kent*, the Germans laughed, as one of the prisoners afterwards said, 'till their sides ached.' The next moment, they 'cried till their eyes ached'—they had caught sight, over the land, of the tripod masts of the two *Invincibles*. Even then they thought they were Japanese and not British—how could British battle-cruisers have come there? But they turned and fled instantly, increasing their speed as they made off towards their consorts. It was too late. The rest of the British squadron weighed instantly and steamed out of the harbour in the order *Carnarvon*, *Inflexible*, *Invincible*, *Cornwall*. Full speed was then ordered, and these four ships, with the *Glasgow* and *Kent* leading them, formed in line ahead. As they passed Cape Pembroke light, the enemy's five ships were seen clearly to the S.E., hull down. No doubt our ships were at the same time visible to them, and a terrible sight they must have been. Von Spee was not in Cradock's position; he had no chance, no doubt of what was before him. Where he had confidently expected another victory he found himself suddenly called upon to face inevitable death. There was no hope of an equal fight, no hope of escape; just as it had been Cradock's duty to fight, so it may have been his duty to run, but he must have felt bitterly sure that running could not save him. The sky was clear, there was a light breeze from the north-west and a

calm sea; the visibility was at its maximum. Into that calm sea he and his squadron must go down in flames.

Admiral Sturdee knew that his opportunity was a perfect one and must not be spoiled. He was, indeed, the very man for this moment—a seaman of the first rank, a willing fighter, and one who knew his own mind. Before this combination of skill, high spirit, and decision, the enemy would turn and twist in vain.

At 10.20 the Admiral made the signal for a general chase. He then took the two battle-cruisers to the front at a tremendous speed—they left the line, worked up from twenty-two knots to twenty-six and half, and flashed past the rest of the squadron. He now headed the line himself in the flagship, with the *Inflexible* on her starboard quarter, and ordered the *Glasgow* to keep two miles from him. After this he eased down to twenty knots to enable the other cruisers to get into station. The enemy were still well ahead, their funnels and bridges showing just above the horizon. There was time to spare before the fight could begin; it was spent in hasty breakfasts—some people ate two—and in clearing for action, throwing woodwork overboard and drowning decks.

At 11.27 the *Bristol*, who had remained in the rear with the *Macedonia*, reported to the Admiral by wireless that some other German ships had been sighted to the south of East Falkland, off Port Pleasant, probably colliers or transports. The Admiral accordingly ordered the captain of the *Bristol* to take the *Macedonia* under his command 'and destroy transports.' The order to 'destroy' was no doubt intended to be limited by the word 'transports'; but the *Bristol*, having

duly caught her two allotted enemies found them to be colliers. She took the crews off and sank both vessels at once—a heavy sacrifice, for the coal was valuable, and the *Baden* and the *Santa Isabel* were fine new ships of 7,000 and 5,000 tons.

Admiral Sturdee had now to make another decision. It was very important to get to work as soon as possible, because—if the enemy continued to run, and especially if he scattered—it might be difficult to finish before dark, and in the dark a ship or two might escape. On the other hand, there were the men to be considered—they had been working hard all night and all morning, with little time to eat and none to rest. They would certainly fight better on a good meal. A 'stand easy' had been sounded at 11 o'clock, and now at 11.30 the men were piped to dinner as usual, which they considered an excellent move. At 12.20 the Admiral determined to force the pace and attack with the two battle-cruisers and the *Glasgow*, his fastest ships. Another splendid rush followed and in less than half an hour the *Leipzig*, the tail ship of the German line, was within range. At 12.47 the Admiral made the signal 'Open fire and engage the enemy.' At 12.55 the *Inflexible* fired from her fore-turret at the *Leipzig*. The range was about 16,500 yards, and no hit was obtained. The *Invincible* then fired from 15,000 yards at the same cruiser; then both fired again, and the *Leipzig*, who was dropping astern of her squadron, could stand it no longer. She was seen from the *Carnarvon* to be on fire, and at 1.20 she turned away to the south-west with the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden*. Admiral Sturdee had foreseen this attempt to escape by dividing, and in accordance with his instructions the *Kent*,

"AT 12.55 THE INFLEXIBLE FIRED FROM HER FORE TURRET"

Glasgow, and *Cornwall* at once followed these three light cruisers, while he continued himself to hunt von Spee. The battle thus turned into two separate fights, and soon afterwards into three; for the *Kent* and *Nürnberg* ended by going off for a single combat far away from the rest.

The main battle was, of course, that between the two Admirals. Sturdee had a winning position; even without reckoning the *Carnarvon*, whose shooting turned out to be exceedingly good, he had a clear superiority in both speed and guns. He could choose and keep what range suited him best, and for every shell of 275 pounds from the 8·2's of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* he could put in one of 850 pounds from the 12-inch guns of the battle-cruisers. With such hitting power as this he might have closed to point-blank range and blown his enemy to pieces. But by so doing he would in all probability have incurred a good deal of injury and loss himself; and this it was his duty to avoid, for to say nothing of his men's lives, his battle-cruisers belonged to the Grand Fleet, and must be returned to Admiral Jellicoe as quickly as possible, and in serviceable condition. His aim therefore was not only to annihilate the enemy but to do so as inexpensively as he could. A heavy casualty list is not in itself a proof of skill, though it may be of courage and endurance. Sturdee's small losses in this action are the best evidence of his judgment as a fighting commander.

When the smaller ships parted company at 1.20 the battle-cruisers gave their undivided attention to the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. Von Spee soon had cause to realise his position; evidently, if he did not

wish to go down without a struggle, he must stop running away and drop back to a range at which he could hope to do some damage. At 1.25, therefore, he turned about seven points to port, the *Gneisenau* following the *Scharnhorst* in line ahead. At the same time both ships eased down and at 1.30 they opened fire. Sturdee at once eased down too and ordered his two big ships to turn together into line ahead, the *Invincible* leading. The duel continued till about 2 o'clock, by which time the range had increased from 13,500 to 16,500 yards, and the enemy after making a hit or two and receiving a good many themselves, had ceased firing. At 2.10 they turned away suddenly ten points to starboard, and made off at top speed.

A second chase began, and lasted for thirty-five minutes. The interval may have been useful to the enemy for putting out fires and repairing damages; but it was at least equally useful to us, for it gave time for our men to get breath after the first excitement of battle, and take in the meaning of the results so far. At 2.45 Sturdee found his range again and opened fire—this compelled von Spee to turn to port once more at 2.53. Two minutes later he returned our fire. But this time the duel was a different affair. The British gunners had got into form; the *Gneisenau* was badly hit by the *Inflexible*, the *Scharnhorst* caught fire forward, and her fire slackened perceptibly. A midshipman who was watching closely records that at one moment he felt sick at the small visible effect of our fire, and then, within twenty minutes, still sicker at the sight of the two doomed ships staggering and burning under the storm of 12-inch shells. By 3.30 the *Scharnhorst* was nearly done; she had lost her

third funnel, and her port guns were destroyed or out of action. She made a final effort, turning ten points to bring her starboard to bear, but her time had come. Clouds of smoke were pouring from her, mixed with blasts of escaping steam, and observers in the English ships saw an extraordinary sight never before recorded in war; from time to time a shell from the Invincibles would cause a large hole to appear in her side, and through it could be seen a dull red glow of fire.

At 4.4 the *Scharnhorst* suddenly listed heavily to port; the list increased very rapidly until she lay down on her beam ends, and at 4.17 she disappeared. Admiral Sturdee records, with characteristic admiration, that her flag remained flying to the last.

On the last turn of the enemy to starboard our ships had turned together instead of in succession, and thereby reversed the order of their line. The *Carnarvon* was now leading, with *Inflexible* second and *Invincible* third. All three ships now turned their guns on to the *Gneisenau*, who passed her sinking leader on the far side and made a gallant effort to continue the fight. But her fire was no longer effective; she could not disturb the practice of our gun-layers—she had become a target.

At 5.8 P.M. her forward funnel was seen to fall and remain resting against the second funnel; her fire slackened very much and she was evidently dying. At 5.15 she succeeded in hitting the *Invincible* with a single shell, but at 5.30 Admiral Sturdee saw her suddenly turn towards him and stop. She had a heavy list to starboard, fires were rising all over her, and smoke and steam pouring forth in clouds. The Admiral

ordered the signal to be made to ' Cease fire,' but before it could be hoisted a single gun opened fire again from the *Gneisenau* and continued to fire at intervals. Accord-

'She had a heavy list to starboard.'

ingly the British ships closed in on her, and at 5.40 she thought better of it. She ceased firing and the flag at her fore-truck was hauled down, though the flag at her peak continued flying. She had fought gamely. ' It was splendid,' says the midshipman

of the *Carnarvon*, 'to see the way they fought three big ships.' But the result was to show the futility of attempting such a feat under modern conditions. The survivors of the *Gneisenau's* crew reported that out of a total of less than eight hundred men, six hundred were killed in action. The captain, when his ammunition was exhausted or could no longer be reached, ordered all survivors on deck and told them to provide themselves with hammocks and any other articles still undestroyed which could support them in the water.

Admiral Sturdee had finally signalled 'Cease fire' at 5.50 P.M. Ten minutes later the *Gneisenau* heeled over very suddenly; the men on deck scrambled over the bulwarks and were seen walking on her side as she lay down on her beam ends. One minute more, and she was gone.

'A pall of smoke hung over the spot where she sank.' In the ice-cold water nearly two hundred men were struggling. Probably few of them had any hope of life; of those who were saved, many expressed their astonishment at finding that they were not to be shot, and some admitted that they could have saved the *Monmouth's* men, but were not allowed to do so. The traditions of the British Navy are not these; as a matter of course, every effort was made to save a defeated enemy. About one hundred and eighty men were rescued—the *Invincible* alone picked up 108. Of these, fourteen who did not survive were buried at sea next day with full military honours.

The *Carnarvon's* midshipman tells a very interesting story of the rescue. 'One of the officers saved was a

first cousin of our Admiral's (Stoddart). He is a strong chap and quite a good fellow. He had an extraordinary experience. Half the *Gneisenau's* men were killed by shell-fire alone. He was in an 8·2 turret as second torpedo officer. The turret was knocked out, and he was the sole survivor. He then went to a casemate gun, which was also knocked out and practically all the crew killed. He went to a third, another casemate, which was also knocked out, and he was again practically the sole survivor. He went to another gun, and the ship was then sunk. He remained in icy water for nearly one and a quarter hours,[1] and was picked up by one of our cutters. He was rather dazed, but cool and collected in the boat. After lying shivering in the bottom of a cutter for half an hour he was hauled up by a bow-line into one of his enemy's ships. When he got on board he said: "I believe I have a first cousin in one of your ships. His name is Stoddart." Then to find him as Admiral in the ship that picked him up! He went into the Admiral's quarters and is now none the worse for his experience. It was a case of the survival of the fittest, and we picked up the pick of the bunch, fine strong men. . . . It was extraordinary to see the lack of animosity against us. We were very cheery saving them. It was a case of "Buck up, old chap, you're all right," &c. They said they did not want to fight us. We were glad to save such plucky foemen.'

We must now leave Admiral Sturdee and put the clock back some hours in order to follow the other part of the battle—the fighting between the smaller

[1] The time was really at the outside half an hour, but no doubt it seemed much longer both to rescuers and rescued.

ships. When the three German light cruisers turned to escape at 1.20 P.M. they went away towards the south, the *Dresden* leading, with the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* one on each quarter. The *Glasgow* was the fastest of the three pursuers, and she soon drew well ahead of the *Kent* and *Cornwall*. She had two 6-inch guns —the Germans had nothing bigger than 4-inch—and she had Coronel to remember, so you may be sure she was a bad ship to meet. The enemy might have tried the plan of falling back and attacking her, three to one, before her consorts could get up. Instead of that the *Dresden*, who was the fastest ship of the whole six, took advantage of her speed, and of the rain-mist which had gathered, to run clean out of sight. She was probably obeying orders, but they were not inspiriting orders, for she left her two slower consorts when they were actually engaged in a struggle with three adversaries, and not yet beaten.[1]

The *Glasgow* had opened fire on the *Leipzig* at 3 o'clock P.M. at a range of 12,000 yards. She hoped to get a hit or two with her 6-inch guns, and so make the enemy alter her course and give the *Kent* and *Cornwall* a chance of getting up. The *Leipzig* kept on, but turned every now and then to fire a broadside; she dropped some shots fairly near the *Glasgow* but did no damage, and the two leading ships both gained on her. At 3.36 the *Cornwall* signalled to the *Kent* to engage the *Nürnberg*, who was nearest to her, and at 4.17 the *Cornwall* herself opened fire on the *Leipzig*. The sky was now so overcast that visibility was much decreased, and good shooting was difficult; the chase

[1] The *Dresden* surrendered to the *Kent* and *Glasgow* on March 14, 1915, after an action lasting five minutes. She then blew up and sank.

seemed likely to be a long one and not certain to end before dark. But at 6 o'clock P.M. a wireless message reached the two British ships from the Admiral, announcing that he had sunk both the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*. Such good news can seldom have been received in the middle of an action at sea: there were loud cheers, and every man on board felt his spirits rise. The shooting seemed to become more effective at once, and the *Leipzig* began to fail. Soon after 7 o'clock she was on fire fore and aft, burning 'like an oil factory,' and at 7.17 the *Glasgow* and *Cornwall* ceased fire. She did not cease firing till 9 P.M., and it was impossible to help her; then she sent up a rocket and boats were lowered. But, before they could reach her, she suddenly turned over on her port side and sank. Seven of her officers and eleven men were saved.

The British squadron were now widely scattered in three different directions; they were hundreds of miles apart, and no one knew what had become of the *Kent*. She made no reply to wireless calls, and it was feared that the *Nürnberg* had disposed of her by throwing mines out as she steamed away. Far from it—the good old *Kent*, the lame duck of the squadron, had not been defeated even in speed. She had had a single chase and a single fight, perhaps the most exciting of the day, and her engineers had done even better than her gun-layers. The *Nürnberg's* ordinary speed was about twenty-four knots; the *Kent's* was only twenty-three and a half, and she was not expected to do quite that. But the whole engine-room department was determined that she should overtake the ship that had killed the *Monmouth*. They

put all their wits and all their energies into it; what they did has become a legend in the Navy—they are said to have heaped the fires with boats, tables, chests of drawers, and the planking of the decks—in fact to have 'burnt the ship to keep her going.' They certainly burnt a lot of wood; but it was mostly spare timber, and the *Kent* had still coal enough left after the action to carry her comfortably back to Port Stanley, where she was the first to arrive next morning.

But it was a grand effort, however it was done. Hour after hour, those engineers and stokers got twenty-five knots out of their lame duck. At 5 o'clock P.M.—nearly four hours after parting company with the flagship—she came at last within range and opened fire. Her guns were admirably served; in an hour and a half the *Nürnberg* was a beaten ship, silenced and burning. She had fired 600 shots and hit the *Kent* over twenty times, killing four men and wounding twelve, but most of these casualties were due to a single shell. Another shot had set fire to some cordite cartridges; a blast of flame went down the ammunition hoist, and for a moment there was danger of a fire in the passage below. The ship might easily have been lost; but Sergeant Charles Mayes of the Marines picked up a cordite charge and threw it away from the fire, seized a fire hose, flooded the compartment, and put out the empty shell-bags, which had been set alight. He afterwards received the medal for conspicuous gallantry.

When the *Nürnberg* was silenced, the *Kent* ceased firing and began to close. The colours of the enemy were seen to dip, but a revolver flashed and they were hauled up again. The *Kent* came on to within 3,300

yards, and the survivors of the *Nürnberg's* men could be seen crowded together on the stern of the ship. They fired once more at the *Kent* and received a shot in return, after which they finally hauled down their colours, and preparations were at once made for saving life. This was a long and difficult business; every boat on the *Kent* had been destroyed or injured, and it took a whole hour to make the absolutely necessary repairs. At last a cutter and the galley were launched, but before this the *Nürnberg* herself had gone. She sank at 7.27 P.M.; only twelve of her men could be seen; and of these, five were dead by the time they were got on board. It was much regretted that the pluckiest of all could not be found—in spite of the ship's surrender he had gone down with her, waving an ensign to the last.

Commander Wharton, of the *Kent*, has described the scene which followed as only Turner could have painted it. 'It was strange and weird, all this aftermath, the wind rapidly arising from the westward, darkness closing in, one ship heaving to the swell, well battered, the foretop-gallant-mast gone. Of the other, nothing to be seen but floating wreckage, with here and there a man clinging, and the "molly-hawks" (vultures of the sea) swooping by. The wind moaned, and death was in the air. Then see! out of the mist loomed a great four-masted barque under full canvas. A great ghost-ship she seemed. Slowly, majestically, she sailed by and vanished in the night.' A ghost she was no doubt. To the end of time, whenever the British Navy fights, there will always be ghost-ships under full canvas majestically sailing by, and sometimes commanders who can see them.

5. Some Reflections

Wednesday, December 9, must have been a rare day for the ships' companies of the British squadron. From three different directions they were gathering together at Port Stanley, every one keen to report their own success and discuss their experiences—you can imagine with what pleasure they sighted each other, boarded each other, and compared scores.

The casualties were very slight. The *Invincible* had none at all, though she got most of the fire from the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* while she was leading, and they hit her eighteen times. The *Inflexible* had one man killed; she was hit three times. The *Carnarvon* was untouched, though at one time she closed to 10,000 yards and did great execution, knocking three of the *Gneisenau's* guns out.

In the second action—that against the smaller cruisers—the *Cornwall* was hit eighteen times; and a good many of the hits were on the water line, so that she came in with a heavy list to starboard. On the other hand, she had not a man hurt. The *Glasgow* was not heavily hit, but she had one man killed and four wounded, and her control top was holed by a big shell which passed through without bursting. The *Kent*, who first took part in this action and then went after the *Nürnberg* alone, was more severely handled than any of the others. She had four men killed and twelve wounded—most of them, it is true, by a single shell; but she was hit in all more than twenty times, and had her funnels pierced and her wireless mast shot away. This last bit of damage was, of course, the reason why she could not take in or answer

the wireless calls of the squadron, when they feared she must have struck a mine.

Altogether, then, the squadron had 6 men killed and 16 wounded. The enemy, on the other hand, had 2200 men in the four ships which were sunk; and of these only 180 were saved. Moreover, of the 2000 who perished, by far the greater number were killed by shell fire. These figures form a striking parallel to those in the Coronel action, where we lost two ships and over sixteen hundred men—probably without inflicting any appreciable loss on the enemy. This one-sided kind of victory is likely to be often repeated in the future. The cause of it is the fact that superior gun-power and gunnery is not only a means of attack, but the best possible kind of defence. In both these fights, the stronger ships very quickly made it difficult for the weaker side to hit them back; and as the modern shell is enormously more violent in its effects than the solid shot of former days, the inequality between the winner and the loser became more marked every minute, until the loser was a mere target. What this means may be gathered from the description of the *Gneisenau's* condition, given by some of the captured crew. She had, towards the end, no one left on her upper deck at all; every officer and man there had been killed, and every gun destroyed—one turret had been torn up and tossed overboard by a twelve-inch shell.

Admiral Sturdee's victory, then, was one of the most decisive kind; and the decisiveness of it, the immense difference between his loss and the enemy's, is the proof of his ability as a fighting commander. The German newspapers tried to make little of his achievement. They added up all the British cruisers in the Atlantic

and all the Japanese and other allied ships in the Pacific, and declared that Admiral von Spee had been destroyed by a mixed fleet of thirty-four warships! Setting aside such foolishness as this, it remains the fact that our superiority in ships and guns was such as to make victory certain. But to win outright with the minimum of loss requires something more—the guns must be well laid and the ships well handled. These are two interesting points, and they are both points in the score of Admiral Sturdee and his captains. There is no reason to doubt that, at target practice, the German gun-layers would have done as well as ours; for they were the pick of the German Navy. And they were certainly doing their best—our men in writing home afterwards spoke of the 'deadly accuracy' of their shooting. But what did the 'deadly accuracy' amount to? The *Gneisenau*, we know, fired 600 shots; if the other three did the same, their total was 2400 shells fired, and with these they made no more than eighty hits. It is certain that our ships did better than this. The *Kent* fired 437 shots at the *Nürnberg*, and her men claim that a high proportion of these were hits. The *Nürnberg* fired 600 shots at the *Kent*, and only hit her some twenty times. The *Kent* suffered no injury of a disabling kind—the *Nürnberg* was sunk outright. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* hit the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* only twenty-one times in all; they must themselves each have been hit twice as often. The British gunners, then, outshot the Germans from first to last; and this was not due, or not entirely due, to the superior skill or training of the men. The gold-medallists of the German Navy ought to have done as well as our average shots; they did not, in fact, come near them, and a principal cause of this must have been

the handling of the ships—that is, the regulation of speed, range, and position. At Coronel, von Spee had skilfully seized the opportunities of the moment; at the Falklands, Sturdee still more skilfully made his own advantage and used it to the full.

An even more interesting comparison is that between Cradock at Coronel and von Spee at the Falklands. In each of these actions, the commander of the beaten force knew his inferiority from the first. In each case, too, the inferiority was one of speed as well as of guns, so that there was small temptation to run. It is just possible Cradock might have got away, more or less battered, if he had turned tail at once and trusted to the rapid fall of night. In his place, von Spee would obviously have tried that course. But Cradock was out to fight and if possible to destroy his enemy, not to save his own ships at any cost. He had found it necessary to go far ahead of the most powerful but slowest part of his force—this is a necessity which will almost always arise in practice, and the result is to show that slow ships are not really a powerful addition to a fast squadron. Cradock then had a hard choice, made up his mind on the instant with a magnificent confidence, and paid his stake without flinching when he lost.

Von Spee, when his turn came, no doubt thought it his duty to run. But it is clear that running, whether it was his own policy or that of his Service, was not only a losing game, but the game of a losing side. You have only to consider what it would have been worth to Germany to have had a Cradock flying his flag in the *Scharnhorst* on that December 8. You can imagine him, when the great battle-cruisers came out of harbour, signalling 'I am going to attack enemy now,' and going

straight to meet them at full speed. Their steam was not yet up—he could have closed them then and there. What a fight that would have been! No impotent scattering flight, no hours of burning misery, with ships turning vainly this way and that, to bring their guns to bear upon an enemy beyond their reach; but a desperate short-range action with every shot telling—a chance of dealing the enemy a heavy blow before the end, and the certainty of leaving a great tradition to the Service.

Beyond all doubt, that would have been Cradock's way—the way of Coronel.

THE STORY OF THE EMDEN

1. Raiding the East

Of all the sea stories in the Great War, the story of the *Emden* is the pleasantest to tell or to hear told. Pleasantest, I mean, to us—not because it ends with a British victory, but because it gives us the opportunity which every Briton naturally desires, to honour the sportsmanship of an adversary. Captain Müller of the *Emden* outwitted us for a time, hit us hard, and cost us millions; but he always seemed to be a jolly fellow—he was not only enjoying his adventures, but he positively made us enjoy them too, for he made us admire him, and admiration is one of the happiest feelings in life. We eagerly and relentlessly desired his extinction as a hostile force; but I am certain that if he had been killed when he lost his ship there are few among us who would not have regretted him.

When war was declared, the *Emden* was at Kiaochau with the rest of the German China Fleet, commanded by Admiral von Spee. To remain there would have meant falling at once into the hands of the Japanese; so the Admiral left for other waters, where he could do more damage at less risk. He also divided his fleet. The two big cruisers, as you have already heard, he kept among the Pacific Islands; three light cruisers he sent to the coast of South America, and the *Emden* and the

Königsberg he ordered to cruise independently in the Indian Ocean. The *Königsberg* had a little success on September 20, when she came into Zanzibar harbour and caught a much older and smaller cruiser, the *Pegasus*, in the act of repairing her boilers. This unlucky little ship she smashed from a safe distance; but, on November 10, her own turn came. The *Chatham* found her hiding up the Rufigi river, on the East Coast of Africa, drove her further up into shoal water, and blocked her there till she could be destroyed by shallow-draught monitors. Some of the crew escaped overland with a gun or two; but the ship herself came to an ignominious end.

The *Emden's* career was a very different one. She began by disguising herself in order to escape the cruisers of the Japanese Fleet. Her 'silhouette,' or outline, would of course be well known; so she changed it completely by adding a dummy funnel to her original three—a trick which her captain is said to have picked up from a story by Rudyard Kipling. She thus made herself look at a distance like one of our large four-funnelled cruisers, and to make the resemblance more perfect she flew the white ensign. It is even said that, on passing a Japanese cruiser, she completed the deception by giving her three cheers! Anyhow, she escaped from the China Seas and got down into the Bay of Bengal, where for exactly two months—from September 10 to November 9—she played the *Alabama* brilliantly among our ships and ports. You must remember what the conditions of the game were for her. She had no base and no coaling stations—she had to support herself entirely by her own exertions, living from hand to mouth on what coal and provisions she could take out

of captured merchantmen. She was attended by an unarmed steamer, the *Marcomannia*, and a collier, but they could not get coal for her, they could only carry what she captured.

It was evident, then, that she could only keep going upon condition of always meeting a prize before her supplies ran low. The problem was to find and overhaul the prizes with as little delay and as little coal-consumption as possible. For this purpose she made great use of wireless messages. Sometimes she warned our merchantmen to change their course, because that German pirate the *Emden* was lying in wait on the ordinary route—sometimes she told them that she was a British cruiser, waiting at a certain spot to give them safe convoy—sometimes, it is said, she broke the rules and sent out the S.O.S. signal, as if she were a British vessel needing to be rescued from shipwreck. But she showed dash and courage as well, and a more amusing kind of cunning, disguising herself with her dummy funnel, and raiding harbours with as much impudence as if her captain's ambition were to burlesque Sir Francis Drake.

Her first break was her most successful one; between September 10 and 14 she took and sank the *Indus*, the *Lovat*, the *Killin*, the *Diplomat*, and the *Trabbock*; the 12th she took and released the *Kabinga*; and on the 14th she sank the *Clan Matheson*—altogether 34,000 tons of shipping in five days. She then made for Rangoon, and by her presence there held up all traffic between India and Burmah. From Rangoon she escaped before she could be caught, and dashed across the Bay of Bengal to Madras, where she treated the city to a miniature bombardment from her 4-inch guns, burnt an oil tank, and was gone again.

A week later, on September 29, she reappeared on the same coast, but some way further south, off the French colony of Pondicherry. From there, on the 30th, she steamed down towards the Indian Ocean and made her second big break. This time she took and sank the *King Lud*, *Foyle*, *Riberia*, and *Tymeric*, and she also captured the *Gryfedale*, but sent her into port at Colombo, after plundering her—a total of nearly 20,000 tons.

Her third and last big score was made about the middle of October, when she captured the *Exford* and *St. Egbert*, and sank the *Troilus*, *Clan Grant*, *Benmohr*, *Chilkana*, and *Ponrabbel*—seven ships of 32,000 tons in all. Then her luck began to fail her. She lost the *Marcomannia* and the collier, captured off the point of Sumatra, and on October 25, when she had taken the *Pontoporos* of 4,000 tons, she had to abandon her prize and fly from H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, who was close upon her heels. It was now that the *Emden* made her most audacious effort—her only attack upon ships of war. On October 28 she was off Penang, where she expected to find two French vessels, the *Dupleix*, an old cruiser, and the destroyer *Mousquet*. At 4 o'clock A.M. she hoisted her dummy funnel once more and steamed right into the harbour as a British cruiser. The *Dupleix* was not there, but the Russian cruiser *Jemtchug* was. The *Emden* came on to within six hundred yards and opened fire, at the same time loosing off two torpedoes, both of which got home, as they were bound to do—they were sitting shots at an easy range. The *Jemtchug* fired a hasty shot or two and sank; the *Emden*, after firing a hundred shots, made off at full speed. Outside the harbour she met the *Glen-*

turret, a British steamer, and was getting out her boats to take possession of her, when a warship was sighted on the horizon. The *Emden* immediately recalled her boats and bolted. Presently, however, she perceived

'She gallantly persisted in making a fight of it.'

that the stranger was only the destroyer *Mousquet*, magnified by the early morning mist. She turned accordingly, closed to 3,500 yards and opened fire. The *Mousquet* was hit at once and her engines were damaged, but she gallantly persisted in making a fight of it, firing ten shells and two torpedoes. She then sank bows first. The *Emden* picked up thirty-six of her men, and then, seeing another destroyer

coming out of Penang, she ran off southwards and escaped under cover of a rainstorm.

The day before this she had sunk a Japanese ship, the *Kamasata Maru*, and two days afterwards she captured a British collier, the *Buresk*. This completed the list of her victims—they were twenty-four in all, and the value of the British merchantmen which were destroyed amounted to £2,000,000—a heavy bag for only two months' sport. Having now no immediate anxiety about coal, she determined to destroy a British wireless station which had been making things difficult for her by giving information to all ships in that part of the world. This station was in the Keelings or Cocos Islands, a tiny group of coral reefs covered with cocoa palms and lying right out in the ocean about half way between Australia and Ceylon. In many atlases they are not marked at all; but if you look at a good map of the Indian Ocean you will see about five hundred miles off Java a single islet marked North Keeling, and fifteen miles south of this a group of others shaped rather like the outside edge of a leaf whose whole centre has been eaten away. These are the South Keelings. One of the smallest of them—the most northerly but one—is called Direction Island, and there was our wireless station. It was in charge of a very capable staff, who were so far from being caught off guard that they beat the cunning Captain Müller at every point of the game.

Early on the morning of November 9, a cruiser with four funnels, at first believed to be H.M.S. *Minotaur*, anchored off Direction Island, and sent a boat ashore. The boat was full of armed Germans, who at once arrested everybody and set about destroying the

wireless apparatus. But they were not quick enough; the operator had already got to his instrument and sent the S.O.S. signal over the whole circle of the surrounding sea, which the German Fleet had somehow neglected to clear of British cruisers. The consequences of this signal were not long in appearing; but in the meantime the *Emden's* men blew up the whole wireless installation—mast, stores and all—and then turned their attention to the submarine telegraph cables, of which there are three, running to Australia, Batavia, and Rodriguez. But here they were doubly outwitted. In the first place, the telegraphists had already got cable messages through, with the news of what was going on; and in the second place they had had the forethought to rig up a dummy cable which took the Germans some time and trouble to cut—of the three real cables they only found and cut one. Finally, though the wireless was thoroughly smashed, the Islanders were quite undefeated, for they had buried a duplicate set of instruments with which they restored their service directly the enemy had gone.

2. Advance Australia!

The *Emden's* men had been enjoying themselves with hammers and dynamite for just two hours, and those two hours were the ruin of them. The ship put to sea again about 9 o'clock A.M., but some time before 7 o'clock that wireless message had already made the necessary arrangements for her reception. Two fine Australian cruisers, the *Melbourne*, Captain Silver, and the *Sydney*, Captain Glossop, were within fifty miles of the Cocos Islands that morning, in charge of a convoy carrying Australian troops to Egypt.

You can imagine their joy at taking in the message from Direction Island, 'Strange warship off entrance.' But the convoy could not be left, only one cruiser could go, and Captain Silver as senior officer in command felt bound to give the order to the *Sydney* and stay with the troops himself. Captain Glossop at once worked up to full steam and ran straight for the Islands. He sighted them at 9.15 and immediately afterwards the *Emden* appeared, running almost straight towards him at a great rate. This time she knew that the business was serious; she stowed her fancy-dress funnel and came on to attack the *Sydney* as gallantly as Cradock himself would have done. When first sighted she was twelve to fifteen miles away; in twenty minutes she had closed to six miles and opened fire.

The action which followed was of course a one-sided one; but it was a shining example of how a duel of this kind should be fought. Captain Glossop's problem was the same as Admiral Sturdee's—not how to win, but how to win outright and with the least possible loss. He accomplished his task with perfect judgment throughout—the *Invincible* herself could not have been better handled. It was very desirable that this should be so, for the action was the first ever fought by the new Australian Navy, and it is of great importance to a new service that the personnel of it should stamp themselves at once as fighting men of the first class. This the whole company of the *Sydney* did—in less than two hours they had established a tradition.

For these reasons the action is worth studying; and fortunately we have two good accounts of it—the official report of Captain Glossop himself, and a descrip-

tion, with many desirable details, in a letter[1] from another officer of the *Sydney*, apparently her First Lieutenant.

Ship to ship, the superiority of the *Sydney* was complete. She was new and her tonnage was 5,600 to the *Emden's* 3,600; she had 6-inch guns to her enemy's 4-inch, and a knot to the good in speed. Captain Glossop's game was evidently to keep his distance, and so get the advantage of his guns. The *Emden*, on the other hand, was bound to close if she could, in order to give her 4-inch guns a chance, and the whole action was a very pretty example of these tactics, carried out with skill on both sides, and ending as they were mathematically sure to end.

Captain Glossop's first manœuvre was to fix his range. The *Emden* was steering practically due north —the *Sydney* was appearing from the north-east, but as soon as she came within six miles she made a sharp turn to starboard and took a course parallel to that of the *Emden*, who was now, of course, on her port side. When firing began, the range was 10,500 yards, and for some time this was almost exactly maintained. The *Emden* tried continually to edge in nearer to her enemy, but Captain Glossop kept his distance by going ahead faster so that the *Emden* was soon left behind on his port quarter. At this rate the *Sydney* would soon have been so nearly dead ahead of her enemy as to make it impossible for either ship to bring many of her guns to bear. The *Sydney* accordingly began to circle to port so as to cross the *Emden's* bows; and the *Emden*, to avoid being raked, made a sharp turn to starboard, thereby bringing

[1] Published in *The Times* on December 15, 1914, and quoted here by kind permission of the Editor.

her port battery to bear. Finding herself still outranged on this tack she then made a still sharper turn to port, doubling on her own track and steering so as to head off the *Sydney* on her circling course.

During this time—the first half of the action—the fighting had been hot on both sides. The *Emden* got in some ten hits, and one of them knocked out practically the whole crew of the *Sydney's* No. 2 starboard gun. The German gun-layers were making fairly rapid and accurate practice. But the Australians were doing decisively better and the *Emden's* fire slackened very quickly—partly, no doubt, because her voice pipes had all been shot away. She was still heading to cut off the *Sydney,* and Captain Glossop allowed her to get within 5,500 yards before he made his next turn—a sharp bend to starboard which increased the range again and brought his starboard guns into action instead of the port battery, which had been doing all the work. The *Emden* followed by making a similar turn and giving her port guns a chance. But by this time she was all but done; the shells from the *Sydney* were raising fires all over her, and she could do no damage in return. At one moment a cloud of yellow smoke hid her from view and the *Sydney's* men all began cheering and waving their caps, thinking she was gone. Boats were instantly ordered out, to save any men who might be swimming; but then someone called out 'She's still firing,' and everyone ran back to the guns.

The second half-hour was now over, and the *Emden* no longer wished to close her enemy; she turned away to starboard and crossed her own previous track, making a complete loop. The *Sydney* did the same, bringing her port battery into play again with deadly

effect. As the two ships ran on an exactly parallel course, Captain Glossop saw that his work was almost done. The *Emden* had lost her foremost funnel and her foremast; she was badly on fire aft, and now her second and third funnels were steadily shot away. She was no longer fighting; she was running for the beach on North Keeling Island, in the hope of saving what was left of her crew. As she staggered in, the *Sydney* turned to port and ran in to within five thousand yards, giving her two final broadsides as she grounded. The action had lasted one hour and forty minutes.

But Captain Glossop's job was not yet finished. He had still to deal with a merchantman which had been in company with the *Emden*, and had followed her during the action. The *Sydney* had had guns trained on her several times while the fight was going on, but Captain Glossop had felt certain enough of the result to be able to hold his hand. When the *Emden* was beached, he saw her attendant making off as fast as she could go. He pursued at once, and in fifty minutes had got near enough to fire a gun across her bows and hoist the International Code signal to stop. An armed boat then boarded her and found her to be the *Buresk*, the captured British collier, with some prisoners and a German prize crew on board. The ship was sinking—her Kingston valve was knocked out and past repairing—so the crew and prisoners were taken off, and four shells sent her to the bottom.

Captain Glossop then returned to the *Emden*. On his way he came across some men swimming in the water, and left two of the *Buresk's* boats to help them. The day was nearly over—it was now four o'clock P.M. and there was no time to lose. The *Emden* was found still

flying her colours at the main-topmast head. She was asked to surrender, by International Code; but replied 'What signal? No signal books.' This reply she made in the Morse Code, and Captain Glossop then asked in Morse, 'Do you surrender?' The *Emden* made no reply to this. She was then asked, 'Have you received my signal?' and again refused to reply. The captured German officers from the *Buresk* assured Captain Glossop that Captain Müller would never surrender. There was therefore nothing for it but to compel him. Very reluctantly Captain Glossop gave the order to open fire again. This brought Captain Müller to realise the facts; and in five minutes' time the *Emden*, like the *Mainz*—and afterwards the *Leipzig*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Dresden*—showed the white flag and hauled down her ensign.

It was getting dark, and no rescue work could be done that night, especially as it was not known whether the *Königsberg* might not be in the neighbourhood. The Sydney therefore steamed away to pick up the *Buresk's* boats. She also picked up two German sailors who had been in the water for about six hours. Captain Glossop then turned back and sent one boat in to the *Emden*, manned by her own prize crew from the *Buresk* and one British officer, with a message that he would return to their assistance next morning.

The *Sydney* lay on and off all night, and her casualties and damages were attended to. The damages were not serious. Of the ten shells which had come aboard, one had made a mess of the after control-platform and carried away a range-finder; one had knocked out a gun's crew, and three had taken effect in the hull. The boys' mess-deck was blown to bits; but in exchange for

their ruined kits they got a magnificent supply of

'And hauled down her ensign.'

souvenirs. The funnels, and the engine and boiler rooms, escaped entirely. The casualties were only

16—4 killed, 4 severely wounded, 4 wounded, 4 slightly wounded. This is in striking contrast to the *Emden's* list of 7 officers and 108 men killed, 3 officers and 53 men wounded, and 8 officers, 9 warrant officers, and 138 men unwounded prisoners. But it must be remembered that the *Emden* was only hitting back during the first half hour; for the last hour she was a target. None the less were the officers of the *Sydney* right to be pleased with the behaviour of their ship's company; for a large proportion of them were young hands and people under training. The officer of whose account I have spoken gives examples which young Australia will not forget. 'Best of all,' he says, 'was to see the guns' crews fighting their guns quite unconcerned. When we were last in Sydney, we took on board three boys from the training-ship *Tingira*, who had volunteered. The Captain said, "I really don't want them, but as they are keen I'll take them." Now the action was only a week or two afterwards, but the two out of the three who were directly under my notice were perfectly splendid. One little slip of a boy did not turn a hair, and worked splendidly. The other boy, a very sturdy youngster, carried projectiles from the hoist to his gun throughout the action without so much as thinking of cover.'

This officer was sent next day to see the captain of the *Emden*, and tell him that if he would give his parole, Captain Glossop would take all his crew on board the *Sydney* and carry them straight up to Colombo. The word 'parole' was not an agreeable one, and had to be carefully defined. Captain Müller then agreed to promise that 'for such time as they remained in the *Sydney* they would cause no interference with ship

or fittings, and would be amenable to the ship's discipline.' The British officer then took an opportunity of saying, 'You fought very well, Sir.' Captain Müller 'seemed taken aback,' and said 'No!' The officer went away, and presently Captain Müller came up to him again and said, 'Thank you very much for saying that, but I was not satisfied. We should have done better. You were very lucky in shooting away all my voice pipes at the beginning.' That is a bit of conversation which ought to give pleasure to the friends of both sides, and it does not stand alone. The British officer records that some of the German officers were thoroughly good fellows. One of them, however, was not—he lost no time in accusing the *Sydney* of firing on the white flag. Thereupon the German torpedo lieutenant and an engineer both said emphatically that this was not so, and Captain Müller afterwards gave an assurance that nothing of the kind had been done, and that he intended to assemble his officers and tell them so. He was also grateful and courteous about the treatment of his wounded, and shook hands and saluted at parting. 'In fact,' says the *Sydney's* officer, 'we seemed to agree that it was our job to knock one another out, but there was no malice in it.' It was a job that the *Sydney* at any rate carried through to perfection.

THE STORY OF A GENERAL

1. The British Expeditionary Force

In the 'Story of a Subaltern' I have tried to show you what it is like to be a boy going straight from school and Oxford into an army which is suddenly called out for active service. You have seen the Subaltern waiting eagerly for the moment of going to the front, and in the meantime finding some romance in scouting along our own shores. Then you have seen him enjoying a rough life in the trenches, and finally doing his bit when thrown on his own resources in a great battle.

The details in that story are all small details—personal experiences of very little importance in comparison with the general outline of the battle itself. I set them out minutely in order to give you a picture of war from the bottom end of the scale—that is, from the point of view of the individual, just one of many thousands of officers, with duties and difficulties all alike. It is well that we should know how these subalterns have faced their job at its hardest, because, though the greater number of them have been swept away without success or distinction, they have not really been insignificant or unsuccessful. Like the small links in a fine piece of chain-mail, they have all held good because each held good. Their names may be forgotten, but not their work. This war has been called 'The Subalterns' War.'

And now what shall I tell you of war from the higher end of the scale? What is it like to be a General, a man who, though he too is an individual, yet stands for a huge force, an army of many thousands? In him their strength is all concentrated, and upon him their success depends; he has to prepare and direct the whole machine. Not only that, but if a moment of strain comes and the machine is in danger of breaking, he must be able to forget his own fatigue, his own anxiety, and his own danger, and by putting his own strength into those under him he must carry his army safely past the breaking point. Not easy, you will think, to find a man like that. No, but we must have such men if we are to remain a great nation; and when we find them, we must study them and remember them. The Great War began for us with a time of extreme peril. One of our armies suddenly found itself, through no failure of its own, in a position where it was outnumbered, outgunned, outflanked, and in danger of destruction. Great skill was needed to manœuvre it out of that position; but to save it from demoralisation —which for an army is one kind of destruction— something more than skill was needed. Happily the man was there, ready to hand, the man who had the double gift required, the gift of military skill and the much rarer gift of character. He is the real hero of this war for us, as Father Joffre and Castelnau and Pétain are for the French; he is the General whom the army will remember. It was his photograph that the sick and wounded kept beneath their pillows in hospital; and when they were asked why, it was in gratitude to him that they answered indignantly, 'Don't you know that? He saved the army.' I shall try to tell you

how this was done; and if you will think over the story when you have read it, I believe you will see one figure standing out above all the rest. You will see a General deciding to accept battle with all the odds against him, and successfully carrying out the most difficult move in war, a retirement in face of a superior enemy—always cheerful and courteous, untiring in body and mind, never doubting or depressed, but in the hardest moment of all inspiring his officers with his own faith, and carrying, as it were, on his own back, the weariness and discouragement of seventy thousand men. It is not for us to praise such characters as this; they are what they are. But we may admire them, and we must—for only a country that admires them can produce them. Nations choose their own future when they choose their heroes.

Now for the story. War was declared, as you know, on August 4; mobilisation was reported by all regiments on the dates ordered, and on the 13th and 14th the transports were sailing. On the 18th, the news was officially published that the British Expeditionary Force had landed in France. The Commander-in-Chief was Field-Marshal Sir John French. The Generals commanding the two army corps under him were Sir Douglas Haig, who had done splendidly in the South African War, and Sir James Grierson, who had the reputation of knowing more about the German ideas and methods of war than any one else in the British army. So these appointments were all received with approval both by the Service and by the public at home.

But there were regrets too; several officers who had greatly distinguished themselves in previous campaigns

appeared to have been forgotten or passed over. The senior of these was General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who had thoroughly earned the confidence of the army and the country by his services in South Africa, and was now left behind in his peace billet, the Southern Command, at Salisbury. Few living Englishmen had seen more active service. He had been in the Zulu War, the Egyptian Campaign of 1882, the Nile Expedition for the relief of Gordon, the Soudan campaigns of 1885 and 1886, the relief of Chitral, the Tirah Frontier campaign, the Nile Expedition of 1898 and the Boer War. The total number of campaigning days in his life was added up by a friend some years ago ; it was then nearly four thousand, equivalent to over ten years of actual fighting service. It goes without saying that in such a career he had been heaped with honours—medals, clasps, promotions, Distinguished Service Orders and Grand Crosses—but besides all these he had won what is much rarer, a distinct place in the history of the British Army. It was he who forced the final surrender of the Boer General Cronje on February 27, 1900, the anniversary of Majuba ; and the story of that is so characteristic of him that it is worth telling again.

On February 18, the British cavalry were holding up Cronje at Paardeberg and the infantry were closing in upon his rear. The 19th Brigade—the 1st Gordons, the 2nd Cornwalls, 2nd Shropshires and Royal Canadians—under General Smith-Dorrien, had marched, in spite of short rations and of the great heat, over thirty miles in twenty-four hours, 'a performance of the very first order, still further enhanced by the fact that there were very few stragglers.' They arrived at 4.15 A.M., and at 7.30 A.M. Colonel Hubert Hamilton brought

Smith-Dorrien the order to cross to the north bank of the river and attack. 'Is there a drift?' asked the General. 'There is Paardeberg Drift,' replied Hamilton. 'It is in flood, and no longer fordable by infantry, but Lord Kitchener is quite sure that nothing will prevent *you* from crossing.' 'Go along, you d—d old courtier!' said the General, and he rode his horse into the stream. The engineers followed with some carts, and succeeded in getting a stout rope across, by the help of which the whole brigade was passed over, with its guns. As they went on to the attack, Colonel MacBean of the Gordons said something to the General in passing, about the discomfort of being unable to shave. Smith-Dorrien pointed towards Cronje's laager. 'Shaved or unshaved,' he said, 'we must have those fellows. I swear I'll never shave again till we *have* got them!'

On February 26, Lord Roberts gave the order for Cronje's position at Paardeberg to be stormed from the west side during the night. The British trenches on that side were about 550 yards from the Boers, and they were held by the 19th Brigade. The advance was made in darkness and at first in silence; then it was perceived, and the Boers opened a hot fire. But by 3 o'clock A.M. the leading regiment—the Royal Canadians—had established themselves in a new line only 95 yards from the Boer trenches, and fighting went on till day was breaking. By this time the General himself had come up into the front line, and when it was light and the Boers were seen to be enfiladed by his troops, he stood coolly up on the parapet of his trench, and called to them to surrender. There was a breathless pause, while the Boers were making up their minds whether to fire or give in. Then, from one pit after another, white flags

appeared, and the decisive victory of the war was won. Smith-Dorrien jumped on his pony and galloped back to camp. On his way he passed the Gordons and called out to MacBean, 'I am going to shave!' A storm of cheers followed him; everyone had heard of his vow and knew that he must have 'got those fellows'—at the cost of a nine-days beard!

It seemed a pity that in the greatest of all our wars no use could be found for a soldier with such a combination of judgment and courage; but, as the General said with his accustomed serenity, '*Someone* must be left at home.' Three days afterwards the neighbour to whom he had spoken found him packing his kit and sealing up his papers. General Grierson had died very suddenly in France, and Lord Kitchener had offered the command of the 2nd Army Corps to Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

The emergency was one which left no time for thinking twice about anything—the General left on August 20, and was fighting early on the 23rd. He naturally took over General Grierson's staff entire, and was as glad to work with them as they were to serve under him. You may be interested to know how a staff is made up. Here there was a chief of the General Staff—Brigadier-General Forestier-Walker, with three General Staff officers under him—Colonel Oxley, Colonel Gathorne Hardy and Colonel Shoubridge—and three Liaison officers—Major Russell, Major Kincaid-Smith and Captain Milward. Their duty was to issue the General's orders to the various officers commanding the troops, to see that they carried them out, and to receive their reports. Then there was the Administrative Staff—General Hickey, chief of the Adjutant-

General's department, with Major Wroughton as assistant—their duty was to deal with the personnel of the force—and Colonel Rycroft, the chief of the Quartermaster-General's department, had the difficult but popular duty of keeping up the supply of bully beef, Maconochie, jam, tea and tobacco — to say nothing of ammunition and transport. The heads of the Signal Service were Major Hildebrand and Captain Gandy. There was also a Camp Commandant, a Medical Officer (Captain Moss, R.A.M.C.), and four French Liaison officers under the Commandant de Boine. The General's own personal staff consisted of two A.D.C.'s, whom he brought with him from Salisbury —Major Hope Johnstone and Captain Bowley. Major Hope Johnstone had been the General's military secretary, but as that position no longer existed (only the Commander-in-Chief had a military secretary at that period of the War) he gladly stepped down a place in order to make sure of going to the front at once. Last, there were two honorary extra A.D.C.'s—Prince Henri d'Orleans-Braganza, and Lord Stanley, a very young officer, who was the hero of a cheerful episode of which you will hear later.

The General reached Bavai, the Headquarters of his army corps, in the afternoon of the 21st, and discussed the situation at once with his staff. He then motored into Le Cateau and saw the Commander-in-Chief, after which he returned about 11.0 P.M. to his own Headquarters and issued his orders for continuing the move north to-morrow.

On the 22nd the Germans were reported to be advancing from Brussels, and it was evident that there would be a battle next day. The British Army was to

form the western end, or left flank, of the Allied force, and Smith-Dorrien's corps was to be on the extreme left, lining the canal between Condé and Mons, with Haig's corps on its right from Mons to Binche. At the junction of the two, in the centre of our line, there was a bulge or salient, made by a big bend in the canal, and Smith-Dorrien saw at once that this would be very difficult to hold if the attack were pushed strongly against it. He therefore prepared to make a second line of defence behind it, and this turned out to be very useful.

The only news which came in during the day was that our cavalry had had their first fight near Binche and had scored decidedly. Captain Hornby of the 4th Dragoon Guards had with his squadron charged and routed some German cavalry, and had brought back some prisoners. It was a small affair, but it convinced our men that they could go through the famous Uhlans 'like brown paper,' and they have never since had any reason to change that conviction. But the real excitement of the day was the knowledge that the largest British force ever commanded by a British General was taking its place in a great European war. In the hundredth year since Waterloo, what account would our men give of themselves against the first line of a huge continental army? Would they prove themselves as unconquerable as the men of 1815?

If they did not, it would not be for lack of great traditions to inspire them. Those four divisions, right and left of Mons, stood for the history of three centuries of unsurpassed devotion; the names of their forty-eight battalions were like so many bugle calls from the past. There, in Haig's corps, were six battalions of the

"BROUGHT BACK SOME PRISONERS"

Guards, and two of the King's Royal Rifles—the Black Watch, the Connaught Rangers, the Munsters, the South Staffords and the Gloucesters — the Oxfords and the Highland Light Infantry, shoulder to shoulder as they were at Waterloo—the Royal Sussex, the North Lancashires, the West Surrey, the Welsh Regiment, the South Wales Borderers and the King's Liverpool Regiment. And here, under Smith-Dorrien, was another constellation of glories—the 2nd Royal Scots, the 2nd Royal Irish, the Royal Fusiliers, the Bedfords, the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Lincolns, regiments which had all been in William III's or Marlborough's campaigns or both; George II's regiments—the 2nd Suffolks, the East Surrey and the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers —with Minden, Fontenoy and Dettingen on their colours; eight more of Peninsula fame—the Norfolks, the Dorsets, the Cornwalls, the West Kents, the Northumberland Fusiliers, the 4th Middlesex, the 2nd South Lancashires and the 3rd Worcesters; five whose honours were gained in India—the Cheshires, the 2nd Duke of Wellington's, the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry, the 1st Gordons, and the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles; the 2nd Manchesters, who had made their reputation against the Maoris, and the 1st Wiltshires, whose name of 'The Springers' was earned in the American War of Independence. All these were of the right stuff—not iron, thrown hastily into the furnace and cast in moulds, but fine steel finely tempered by long inherited discipline and the memory of their past. But proud as their Generals were of them, they could not foresee that in this War they would far surpass all records, falling in one year almost to the last man, that behind their unbroken line a nation might be trained to arms.

2. The Battle of Mons

The first day of battle—Sunday, August 23—began quietly enough; a shell or two at daybreak, and then our outposts were attacked all along the line, beginning from the right. At 8.0 A.M. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien received a visit from the Commander-in-Chief; at 9.30 he drove along his line in a motor to view the development of the German advance. He began by arranging with General Hubert Hamilton, commanding the 3rd Division at Mons, for the preparation of the second line of defence behind the salient. It was evident that the Germans meant to attack heavily at this point—the outward curve of the canal—and if they should succeed, as they almost certainly would, they must not be allowed to debouch to the south between our two army corps. The new line was to run from a bridge over the canal west of Mons, along a road which sloped away south-east through Wasmes, Pâturages, Frameries and Bougnies to Givry. The bridge itself was at Pommereul, and was laid with explosives ready for demolition; it was in charge of a detachment of the Cornwalls. These arrangements were all well made, and when supplemented as you will hear later, they worked very satisfactorily.

Sir Horace started on his return journey some time after midday and was lunching in his car when a tremendous explosion was heard about a hundred yards in front. The German artillery had begun shelling the road with high explosives—our men have become intimate enough since then with Jack Johnsons and Black Marias; but this was a first experience for the General and his aides, and they sniffed the virulent

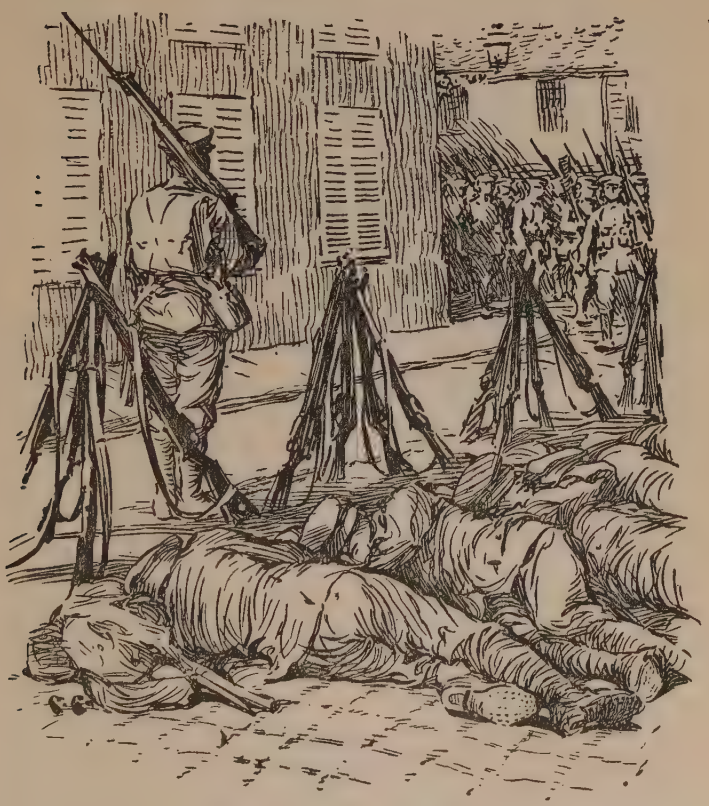
fumes as they passed through them with peculiar interest. The artillery fire increased in violence from this moment onwards, and it soon became clear that von Kluck must have five or six hundred guns in action along the twenty-five miles of front. This meant that instead of one—or at the most two—army corps, which had been reported to our General Headquarters by the French, our army was being attacked by about four corps and outflanked by a fifth. But it had no intention of giving up the position.

The General now returned to his Army Headquarters at Saar-le-Bruyere to receive reports from his divisional commanders. The first thing which happened was what he had expected. The German attack on the salient had become too heavy to be resisted with any further advantage—the defence there was to be withdrawn to the second line as soon as it had made the enemy pay the full price. That it had certainly now done; von Kluck had sent his men against the bridges at Nimy and Ghlin in close order and in successive waves —they advanced, our men said, 'like the crowd coming away from a cup tie'; and the Royal Fusiliers and Middlesex Regiment, who had the post of honour, held their ground and shot 'wholly together' like the bowmen of Cressy. They proved, once for all, the superiority of our infantry to the German in field fighting. The Kaiser's men came on in droves, firing from the hip, making a tremendous noise and hitting nothing. King George's men lay in a thin line sweeping them away with rifle and machine-gun fire, line after line, drove after drove, bunch after bunch, till the survivors broke and made way for a fresh mass. Nothing but the overwhelming weight of their artillery fire saved the

Germans from a total repulse. They only succeeded after the machine-gun teams of the Royal Fusiliers had been wiped out time after time, and when one by one the guns themselves had at last been blown to pieces. Lieutenant Maurice Dease, the machine-gun officer, stayed till the end, though mortally wounded, and both he and Private Godley, who was also badly hit, were awarded the V.C. In their two hours of splendid endurance they had inflicted almost unimaginable loss upon the enemy. The regiment was then withdrawn through the town of Mons with the help of the Middlesex and Royal Irish, both of whom also showed great courage and suffered heavily.

During the afternoon the attack was continued along the straight piece of the canal to the left; here the bridges were blown up, but the enemy brought up pontoons and began to force a crossing. At 5 P.M. Sir Horace sent Major Hope Johnstone to communicate with General Hamilton, who told him that there was a small gap, between the 3rd and 5th Divisions, which made him uneasy. Hope Johnstone went on to the cross roads at Bougnies and chanced upon General Haking, the Officer Commanding the 5th Brigade (part of the 2nd Division) which was to entrench in a position there. He then returned hastily to Headquarters and reported what he had seen and heard. It was now 7 P.M. Sir Horace grasped the situation instantly and saw how to meet it. He had not a man left to put into the gap, but evidently there were troops near at hand which could be borrowed. He dashed off in his car to Sir Douglas Haig's Headquarters at Le Bonnet and asked for the loan of a brigade until next day. Sir Douglas consented to lend the 5th Brigade, and Colonel Maurice

(one of General Hubert Hamilton's staff) was despatched to lead the Worcesters and Connaught Rangers in



'They found the work done.'

advance to the gap. These two battalions, with the help of some guns which made fine practice with shrapnel, drove back the German advance; and when the Oxfords and the Highland Light Infantry came up

in support, with bayonets fixed, they found the work done and Frameries full of British troops asleep on the pavements. They went on themselves as far as Pâturages and slept in the square there.

That night Sir Horace was well satisfied with all that he had heard of the day's fight. His men had made a good retirement from the salient, and had held the rest of the position well against great odds. A German attempt to turn his left flank had been brilliantly defeated by Allenby's cavalry division—they had moved right across our rear from right to left, a very difficult operation requiring excellent staff work, and most successfully carried out. The left had also been strengthened by the arrival from Valenciennes of the 19th Brigade, which came up from the lines of communication and was not under Smith-Dorrien's command. Best of all, the troops, as well as their General, though fairly tired, were in good heart for renewing the fight next day. They had come well out of the first round, and had had such unexpected success in killing Germans that they believed they could do better still. So they probably could have done, but the opportunity was to be unexpectedly snatched from them.

The General and his staff lay down soon after 10 o'clock; but their rest was not to be a long one. At 3 A.M. General Forestier-Walker, who had been sent for by Sir John French, returned with very disappointing orders. Sir John had been informed at 5 P.M. the day before by a telegram from General Joffre that the 5th French Army on our right was falling back, instead of advancing, so that the British army was exposed not only on the left flank but on the right as well, and

must retire at once in order to keep in line. This could not now be done until the impedimenta had been got clear of the fighting troops, and of course there was no more sleep for anyone. The rest of the night was spent by Sir Horace in ordering this move and in seeing Sir Douglas Haig and settling on a course of action. Baggage and supply trains take time to be cleared away, and both Generals realised that while this was being done they would have a very stiff day's fighting. To withdraw in face of such numbers was a most difficult and dangerous operation.

But even difficult and dangerous operations can be carried out by British infantry if only they are well handled. This second day's battle—which was the beginning of the Great Retreat—may be described as an alternate right and left swing. No orders were given for it, but it took the following course. First, Sir Douglas Haig attacked sharply with the 1st Corps, while Sir Horace withdrew his left, which was exposed to much closer and heavier pressure from the enemy. Then Sir Horace in turn stood fast and hit hard on a line from Valenciennes to Frameries, while the 1st Corps withdrew behind his right, to the Bavai-Maubeuge road. Finally, Sir Horace again retired both his divisions and brought them into line on the west of Bavai.

At dawn the whole British force stood to arms and the Germans began a heavy bombardment. By the German programme our rearguards were to be first demoralised and then rushed; but they refused to accept the German programme. The 5th Brigade moved out of Pâturages and Frameries and entrenched to the south of the towns; there they held on till 11 A.M., breakfasting on biscuits and chocolate, and the bread

brought them by the Belgian people, who were flying before the enemy. Further to the left the 13th Brigade was inflicting a disastrous surprise on von Kluck's advance guard. The Royal West Kents, the Duke

'Breakfasting on biscuits and chocolate.'

of Wellington's, and the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, had stoutly maintained their position in the town of Wasmes, occupying the streets on three sides of the market-place. When the artillery preparation was over the Germans entered the town at once, marching down through the streets from the north in close column. The machine-guns and rifles of the

three regiments opened upon them at their most helpless moment, and brought them down in heaps. They continued their effort in the German fashion for two hours, marching to destruction with a firmness so unbroken as to appear mechanical. At the end of that time the streets were choked with their dead and wounded, and the 13th Brigade having succeeded in their delaying action began to retire gradually upon St. Vaast.

During these hours the staff of the 2nd Corps were back at the 1st Report Station at Hon, in front of Bavai. It was an anxious time; for when the attack of the 1st Corps was over, von Kluck had immediately reinforced his right, and was trying not only to keep the gap open between our two corps but to outflank Smith-Dorrien's left. The 15th Brigade was there, and quite early in the day Sir Charles Fergusson, the General of Division, had been obliged to send a request for cavalry to clear his flank. General Allenby at once moved up the 2nd Cavalry Brigade—the 9th Lancers, the 4th Dragoon Guards and the 18th Hussars—under General De Lisle. The 18th Hussars were at first ordered to dismount and open fire on the German advance, but of course at long range only, and it soon became evident that they could not put in a sufficient weight of lead to stop the immense masses in front of them. The only artillery available in support consisted of one battery of R.H.A. and one of R.F.A. The 9th Lancers and the 4th Dragoon Guards, who had also done good work for some time with enfilading fire from the railway embankment, were now back at the village of Audregnies, in the direct line of the German advance.

General De Lisle saw that the situation was becoming

desperate and justified a desperate move. He sent orders to Colonel David Campbell of the 9th Lancers and Colonel Mullens of the 4th Dragoon Guards that the enemy's advance must be checked, and that the two regiments must be ready to charge if necessary. The word desperate is not too strong for such a resolution. The German force at and near that point was estimated at a division of infantry with their artillery, and it was proposed to stop this mass by hurling two regiments at it—say a thousand lances against ten thousand rifles, backed by fifty guns and a still larger number of machine-guns. But the order to move out of the village was received with delight, and every man of the thousand felt that the time of his life had come. The cavalry spirit is like fire, a fatal master but the most splendid of servants. Its true opportunity does not come once in a generation, but it is itself undying and can bide its time, for it is one of the primitive joys of human nature. Waterloo, Balaclava, Kimberley, Audregnies—this was only the fourth chance in a hundred years, but a spirit lives by tradition more than by experience—the real soldier is always a veteran. These cavalry men were as ready for their first charge as if it had been their twentieth.

The enemy were now advancing across open fields with corn standing in stooks. In order to give their guns as little chance as possible, the two cavalry regiments left the village in opposite directions, and made their way at the trot towards the front. When they cleared the lanes and appeared in the open the Germans broke up and ran for cover to the corn stooks; at the same time their machine-guns opened fire. The 9th Lancers led the charge, and they had got within about

five hundred yards of the enemy when they suddenly found a barbed wire fence in front of them, too strong and high to be taken in any way. There was only one thing to be done—Colonel Campbell swung sharply to the right and the regiment rode for their lives along the wire, finally taking what cover they could behind a mill, some slag heaps, a railway embankment and a cemetery. The 4th Dragoon Guards followed them; the guns blazed and rattled—the charge was over in no time, with heavy loss to us and none to the enemy.

But David Campbell was not the man to give up his job unfinished. He put his men in charge of Captain Lucas-Tooth and went off to get further orders from General De Lisle, cantering alone across the open under a hail of bullets as coolly as if he were running back to the pavilion at Clifton through a storm of applause. Lucas-Tooth in the meantime dismounted his remaining men and opened fire again on the enemy, who for four hours did not venture to come beyond the barbed wire fence. Our troops were then withdrawn and some of the 9th Lancers, under Captain Francis Grenfell (who was already twice wounded), helped most gallantly to bring away the guns of the 119th Battery R.F.A., the officers and men of which had almost all been knocked out.

The accounts of this charge which came in to Headquarters were at first unduly sombre. The effect produced by the cavalry was not yet known and their losses were overstated. Major Hope Johnstone, who had gone with Sir Horace to see Sir Douglas Haig about midday, heard that the 9th Lancers had been 'wiped out': their actual loss was 75 killed and wounded, and

that of the 4th Dragoon Guards was 56. A better account was received in the evening when Colonel Campbell himself came into Bavai and dined with Sir Horace; but the losses were still believed to be very severe. Sir Charles Fergusson afterwards thanked General De Lisle for his efforts to help his division.

The position at Bavai, upon which the whole British force was now successfully retiring, was to be prepared during the day by civilians; but, except for a few trenches, very unlike the military pattern, practically nothing had been done in the way of preparing a position for a large force to hold. The Curie was secured for the Headquarters of the 2nd Corps; General Headquarters were already established in the Mairie. By nightfall the troops were reported to have safely reached the new line—Maubeuge-Bavai-Wargnies—and to be extremely cheerful. They were, of course, tired and hungry; but they had done well and knew it.

Now comes a touch of comedy. Sir Horace and his staff had done well too, and they too were tired and hungry. They dined at an inn called 'Le Paysan,' and when they went off to their beds ordered breakfast to be ready for 4.30 next morning. You may be sure they were punctual to the moment, and sharp set, with a hard day before them. Imagine their feelings when they found that among the risks of war was one which they had forgotten—there was no breakfast. The inn was deserted. Bavai had heard all about the doings of the Huns in Belgium; the people very reasonably thought it better to retire in front of the English than behind them, and during the night they had gone—men, women, children, old folk and all. The staff swore a little, laughed at themselves, and drove off to

the 1st Report Centre at Monroux. There they were lucky enough to get some eggs and bacon.

The retirement was then continued. The impedimenta had been sent away at 2 A.M. There was a good deal of grumbling among the men; but it was generally believed that the French were beginning to hold the enemy on the right, and that a stand would be made all along the line in the next position, at Le Cateau. Sir Horace's face was watched as a kind of moral barometer. 'He looks a winner,' one man was heard to say, 'and that's enough for me.' But beneath the General's imperturbable coolness and courtesy there were serious anxieties. The two army corps had up to now been in fairly regular touch—they had actually converged on Bavai. But to-day they had to separate rather widely, Sir Horace passing to the west of the Forêt de Mormal and Sir Douglas to the east, in order to avoid the thick wood and uncertain roads. It was arranged, at Sir Horace's request, that the start should be early and orders were issued for the force to be all south of the Valenciennes-Maubeuge road by 5.30 A.M.; but the 1st Corps found it impossible to keep time as accurately as they wished, and it was 8.30 A.M. before their last brigade got away. Even then they were delayed. Sir Horace, of course, knew nothing of the reasons; but he found the gap between his own corps and Sir Douglas's steadily widening, till the two were some eight miles apart. Lord Ernest Hamilton explains that this was, in fact, due to 'scares,' or reports of rearguard attacks, which made it necessary for some of the 1st Corps to halt, or even to go back at times. The Oxfords, for instance, had to retrace the distance from

Leval to Pont-sur-Sambre, only to find nothing doing. The reports were probably spread by Germans, disguised as British officers.

The situation therefore was becoming anxious, and after midday a fresh disappointment had to be met. Sir Horace had spent the morning directing the retirement from his motor, and went finally about 3.30 P.M. to Le Cateau to see Sir John French. He failed to find him, for Sir John had started at 2 P.M. for St. Quentin, twenty-five miles off. From Sir Archibald Murray, however, the Chief of the Staff, he received Sir John's orders not to make a stand at Le Cateau, but to continue retiring. The General Headquarters were even then in the act of preparing to evacuate Le Cateau —clerks, typists and orderlies swarming off in motor-lorries to follow the Commander-in-Chief to St. Quentin. Sir Horace spent the next few hours in selecting a position in case he had to fight next day, and then drove to Bertry, where his own Headquarters were to be. On the way he saw some of General Sordêt's French cavalry corps moving across to our left rear. They had been asked to help us during the retirement, but their horses had been too tired—they did their best for us next day, when they were most needed.

The evening was spent in the difficult task of finding out the exact whereabouts of the troops, many of whom had covered thirty miles, and whose rearguards were desperately engaged. It was not until 1.30 A.M. that this was done; and Sir Horace, by way of a night's rest, had to solve two problems. First, how was he to deal with General Allenby's cavalry division, General Snow's 4th Division of infantry and General Drummond's 19th Brigade—which were none of them under

his command though actually fighting near his corps at the moment? And secondly, in face of the orders he had received, not to fight, how was he to save his weary force from being crushed in the act of retiring—for the Germans were now close up and outflanking him on both sides? He quickly came to the conclusion that it was an occasion when he would be justified in disobeying his orders; and taking the cavalry, the 4th Division and the 19th Brigade under his command, he issued instructions for a battle at dawn.

3. Saving an Army

In the early morning of August 26, news came in that the 1st Corps had been attacked after dark at Landrecies and had inflicted a severe check upon the enemy. A Prussian division had made a forced march right through the Forêt de Mormal, hoping to smash up our troops in their night quarters, when they were tired and off guard. They came up against the wrong men—Landrecies was occupied by the 4th Brigade of Guards. The most vivid account of the fight is that sent home by Lieutenant Percy Wyndham of the 3rd Coldstreams. 'Had a hurried tea and at 7 o'clock went out with the company (No. 3) to guard all the approaches to the town. We were told there were some English and French troops who would want to come through. Hardly was it dark, about 8 P.M., and raining, when we heard a body of men approaching. We challenged them to halt; they came on, answering in French. We told them again to halt; they were then only ten or twenty yards off, and with a yowl they sprang forward and yelled "Deutschland!" After that, words fail me. Hell was let loose. Our men lay

down flat and poured volley after volley into them. I flattened myself against a wall and quaked. In about three minutes it subsided and awful groans filled the air. Then little Charles Monk came out and said, "Come on, No. 3, line the road!" and we all gathered round. Another company came up in support, and David (Bingham) got his machine-guns into action. Nothing can describe what followed. They kept charging up to us, and we replied with volley after volley. The men were marvellous, quite cool, and obeyed all our fire orders to the letter. I have never known anything like the bursts of fire. They then brought up a gun, at 200 yards, and fired lyddite point blank at us! My word, it was a caper. They kept coming on, and at about 12.30 made a final desperate effort. I thought we never could stick it, but we did. I just said my prayers as I lay, nose buried in the ground, and waited for my bit of shell or bullet. But, glory be to God! it never came. We drove them right back with our fire and they never came on again, and they tell me 2,000 of them never will again. . . . Our losses were 119 killed and wounded.'

This news was cheerful enough in itself, but to the General of the 2nd Corps it meant that he could expect no help from his colleague. Sir Douglas Haig was evidently delayed far to the north and east of him, and von Kluck was forcing a wedge in between them. Sir Horace must play the game out alone—he was in the tightest of tight places, for he had his orders, and to obey them literally meant destruction. He knew how foot-weary his men were, and how near to discouragement; if he called upon them to retreat once more, with a confident enemy close upon their heels, the retreat

must almost certainly become a rout. It would be no one's fault—the army would be annihilated by an overwhelming force; but it would be annihilated, and the Empire would be in mourning for fifty years.

The position was desperate; how could it be saved? By military skill, by high courage, by dogged endurance? All these qualities were necessary; but all put together, they were not sufficient—they could not make one corps the equal of three, or save it when surrounded from being forced to surrender or collapse. What was needed first of all was character. This is where games are the miniature of war and of any active life. We have all known good cricketers who could see clearly and make beautiful shots when nothing much depended on them, but who lost their form when a rot set in, and went to pieces with the rest. The great General is the one who never loses his form. Even if he is called upon to face some awful moment on which great issues hang, he will still see clearly, decide unhesitatingly, and play to win; and this he will do because he has the power to be always himself, to draw upon the vital reserve which we call character. None of our Generals had more of this power than Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien; he saved us in our greatest danger by being simply himself. We shall always read the history of those black days happily, because they are not a tale of hesitation or passive acceptance of disaster, but an example of how, by decision, by initiative, and by determination, drawn from the stores of his own past, a commander may turn to-day's defeat into to-morrow's victory.

Before daybreak on August 26, Sir Horace had made his two decisions. The first was that he must be master

of his weapons. He sent word to General Allenby and General Snow that the cavalry and the 4th Division would come under his command. He made no bones about it, nor did they. It was not the moment to stand on etiquette or wait for official confirmation. The 4th Division was ordered to form the left of the line from Haucourt to Caudry, with the 3rd next it in the centre from Caudry to Troisvilles, and the 5th (with the 19th Brigade) on the right at Le Cateau. The cavalry were widely scattered; the brigade and a half near Caudry were to fall back on Ligny and try to guard the left flank, the two and a half brigades at Catillon were to move to the support of the right flank.

The second decision was the great one—the one for which Horace Smith-Dorrien was born and bred. He made it in the small hours of the 26th, and shortly afterwards wired to General Headquarters to tell the Commander-in-Chief what he had decided. The reply he received was that the Commander-in-Chief wished to speak to him on the telephone: so at 7 A.M. he walked into the railway station at Bertry and asked to be put through to the British General Headquarters at St. Quentin. He soon heard the voice of General Henry Wilson, Assistant Chief of the Staff to the Commander-in-Chief, and at once explained to him the state of affairs as he saw it. 'My orders are not to fight but to keep on retiring. My men are too weary to march; before they can retire I must fight; a blow to the Germans is the only way of staving off a disaster; and the battle has actually begun.' General Wilson replied, 'Sir John did not intend you to fight, and he wishes you to break off the battle and retire at the earliest moment possible. He is anxious that you should not continue to fight a

moment longer than is absolutely necessary. He cannot send you any support—the 1st Corps is incapable of movement. His opinion is that in not retiring you are risking a Sedan.' Sir Horace was prepared to take this risk. 'We shall put up a real grand fight,' he said, 'but with my men too weary to march, both my flanks in the air, and a vastly superior number of the enemy against us, no doubt there is a possibility of our being surrounded.' General Wilson then suggested that Sir John French might be willing to come back and take over the actual command. But Sir Horace had no desire to avoid a responsibility that was rightly his own. 'I strongly deprecate that,' he replied. 'The battle is now going on, on such an extended front that the troops would not know of Sir John's presence on the field, and it is not as if I had any large reserves which he could handle. After all, this is only the commencement of a great war, and if a disaster should occur, it is essential for the good of the cause we are fighting for that the Commander-in-Chief should be free to go to England and bring over another army. But my one chance is to fight and I am going to do it.' General Wilson could not conceal his admiration. 'Well,' he said, 'your voice is the only cheerful thing I've heard for three days.'

Sir Horace, as we have seen, had already made his preparations. His instructions for the fight had been issued to all the troops at 4 A.M., and at 2 A.M. he had sent to General Sordêt an urgent message saying, 'I am going to fight, and I hope you will be able to cover my left.' Sordêt sent back no reply, but in the hour of need he was there.

By this time the enemy had got the artillery of at

least four army corps into position. Our guns were outnumbered, five to one; but they made a magnificent fight of it and inflicted huge losses on the Germans advancing in mass. So did our infantry; they made and lay in shallow trenches, some few of which had been hastily and unscientifically dug for them by devoted Frenchwomen, and they were desperately tired; but they shot as no other troops had ever shot, and for seven hours their enemies went down before them like cut grass. At one time the 4th Division, on the left flank, was forced back, but by a brilliant counter attack they regained their ground. Nothing could really shift them but overwhelming gun power. By midday the main artillery duel was over, and some of our guns, especially of the 5th Division, were silenced. This was a severe loss; for, to infantry, even the sound of their own guns is a support. By 2 o'clock the 5th Division had been outflanked, and pounded almost to pieces. At 2.30 Sir Horace received a message from Sir Charles Fergusson that he feared his men could stand it no longer, and were beginning to dribble away. Sir Horace sent him instructions to order the 5th Division to retire. He had not a word of blame for them; he knew they would not fail him till they were in extremes, and he sent instructions to the rest of the troops what to do in case they fell back. His only reserves were two battalions and one battery; these he had already had to use once, and now he sent them in again to cover the retirement.

For the moment the General had done his part; the task of carrying out his orders was for his subordinates. I have told you how Sir Horace took over General Grierson's staff: he was fortunate in finding

such officers, for it was in his judgment largely due to this staff that the British force fighting at Le Cateau was able to be withdrawn. The Chief of Staff of the 2nd Corps, Brigadier-General Forestier-Walker, was a man of great nerve and ability, and a very rapid worker. He had drawn up concise instructions for the retirement of the several divisions, if such a move should become necessary, and consequently every divisional commander and staff knew exactly by what roads they were to move, so that the danger of their running into each other and getting blocked was provided against. Then the head of the Quartermaster-General's department, working in with him, had laid his plans for clearing the road of all unnecessary impedimenta, such as food and ammunition columns, field ambulances, &c. Thus, when the 5th Division were being forced back, all that remained to be done was for the staff to tell the commanders of the other divisions to conform to the movements of the 5th Division, which had already begun to retire by prearranged roads.

It was now past 3 o'clock and the 5th Division were coming back in great disorder. It is best to be precise about this, because exaggerated and even hysterical descriptions were sent over to England soon afterwards. Admirably terse and well balanced accounts also came in private letters; one of the best is by Lieutenant Frederick Longman of the 4th Royal Fusiliers, one of General Hamilton's reserve battalions. 'At 1 P.M., a lull—we all thought we had beaten them off. Suddenly a tremendous burst of firing in the centre of our line; 3.30, order for a general retirement. Then I saw a sight I hope never to see again. Our line of retreat was down two roads which converged on a village about

a mile behind the position. Down these roads came a mob—men from every regiment there, guns, riderless horses, limbers packed with wounded, quite unattended and lying on each other, jostling over ruts, &c. It was not a rout, only complete confusion. This was the Germans' chance. One battery of artillery sent forward, or one squadron of cavalry, would have turned this rabble into a complete rout, and the whole army would have been cut up piecemeal. Meanwhile, we were the only regiment I saw in any order. We had not been engaged, and had only lost one officer and about thirty men; we had also had a hot meal, so that we were in good condition. We went back in a succession of extended lines, in absolute order, and formed up behind a farmhouse near where the roads met. Here we waited in mass, while the rest of the army streamed past. It was a most trying half hour. It seemed inevitable that they would follow up, and then the jam in that village would have been indescribable—I have since heard that they had sustained fearful losses, and also a division of French cavalry was covering our retreat. When the rabble had got past we moved off, marching at attention, arms sloped, fours dressed, &c., through the village; 7.0 P.M., moved off again and marched till 1.0 A.M.'

Sir Horace too saw this, and no doubt he too hoped never to see the like again. But he gave not the least sign of dismay. His business was to save his army. He had already sent his car away, and was now on horseback, with some of his staff; the rest had gone, in accordance with a well-thought-out plan, to important points on the several roads along which the force was retiring, to maintain order and direct those who had lost their

units. Sir Horace rode along the line, and hearing very heavy artillery firing to the westward naturally began to fear that the enemy were outflanking the 4th Division. To make sure about this the General with one A.D.C. galloped up a piece of rising ground, and perceived with joy and gratitude that the noise was not that of German guns only, but the short sharp bark of the inimitable French Horse Artillery. Sordêt had played up, and our left flank was safe.

Sir Horace then rode back to the Roman road—the long and dead straight road from Bavai to Estrées by which the 5th Division were retiring. It was a dispiriting sight, for heavy rain was now falling, and the men who came staggering past were so tired and footsore that many threw away their packs and entrenching tools, and some could go no further, but rolled over by the roadside and were dead asleep in a moment. The greater number trudged on in a solid mass, units all broken up and mixed together, and groups of men all believing that they themselves were the sole survivors of their regiment. It might be thought that a General had no part to play here—Napoleon, on a day not unlike this, rode off with a 'tout est perdu ; sauve qui peut.' Smith-Dorrien stayed among his men, knowing that all was not lost, because he had the power to handle them even in extreme distress. An American volunteer, who was present, has said the right word[1] about him both here and afterwards. 'I speak,' he says, 'with profound recognition of his high attainments as a military leader, and of his great heart. Truly, a kinder man I have never met.'

[1] *From Mons to Ypres*, by Frederic Coleman (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.).

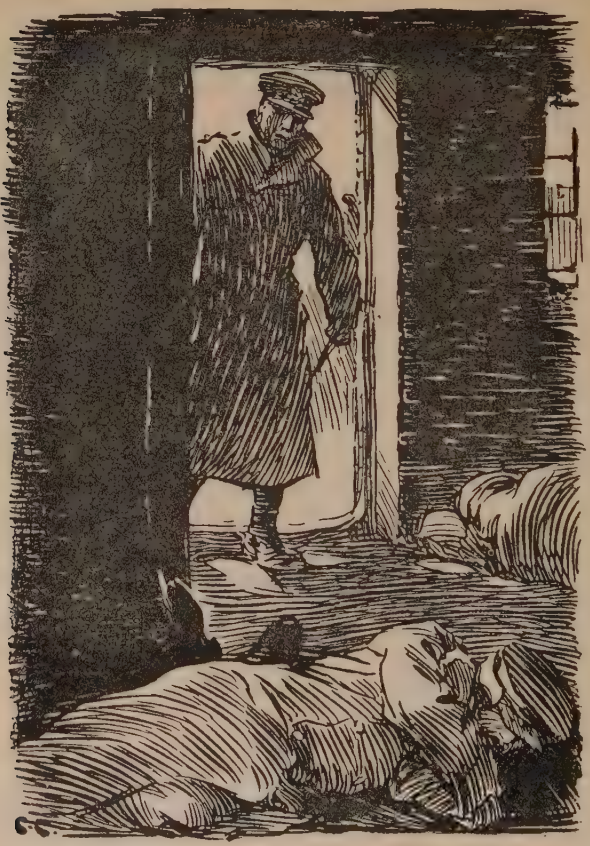
You may imagine what it meant to these tired soldiers—tired a dozen times over, tired with four days' marching and fighting, tired with killing endless hordes of enemies, tired with facing for nine hours an irresistible tornado of shell and shrapnel—to come suddenly upon this quiet commanding figure of their General. Here was the head of everything, the man who must know all that there was to know; yet he was kind, cheery, unhurried and unworried, walking his horse amongst them, talking to them in his cool, courteous voice, assuring them that all was well, that the attack was over, that they had beaten their enemy to a standstill, that they were only retiring to keep in line with the French Army and to share in the coming advance. 'Right ahead,' he said to one little bunch after another. 'You'll find a lot more of your battalion further down the road.' For two hours they had the comfort of this voice, and every minute that passed proved the words more true. There was practically no pursuit, no rear-guard action: guns were still firing, but without effect. 'Never mind the guns,' said the General, 'I'll look after them; you go quietly on.' They did go on. It was a very sorry crowd that worked their way back towards St. Quentin that night, but it was not a panic-stricken crowd. The Staff backed up their Commander; at the gate of every field, and the entrance of every by-lane stood an officer collecting a certain battalion or brigade. 'This way Suffolks, this way Manchesters, all this way the 14th Brigade.' It was a tremendous piece of work; more officers were borrowed to help the Staff, and the motor-drivers took a hand as well. The General himself, having done what he could for them, went on at 9 P.M. to report to his Commander-in-Chief.

"RIGHT AHEAD," HE SAID, "YOU'LL FIND A LOT MORE OF YOUR BATTALION FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD"

He reached St. Quentin at 10 P.M. only to find that General Headquarters were no longer there—the Commander-in-Chief had gone back at midday to Noyon, thirty-five miles further and fifty-five miles behind where the battle was raging at Le Cateau. There was nothing for it but to follow. Sir Horace had left his staff on the road near Estrées, helping to keep the troops moving and straighten out blocks in the line of march. He now took Captain Bowley and Prince Henri d'Orleans in his car and ran down to Noyon, after arranging with Colonel MacInnes, the Director of Railways at St. Quentin, for some trains to pick up the lamest of the men. His hurried journey was not a good substitute for a night's rest. It was long past midnight when they reached Noyon and woke up the Commander-in-Chief. Reports of the direst kind had reached him—he had been convinced that the 2nd Corps was no longer in existence, and Sir Horace's undefeated serenity seemed to him at first almost outrageous. When he realised that the fight had, in fact, achieved its object, and that the three divisions were being put in order to rejoin the line, his scepticism was overcome and he spoke in warm terms of Sir Horace's achievement.

The journey back was still a sleepless one; there was plenty to think of. When Sir Horace reached St. Quentin once more, at 5.30 A.M., the day's work was waiting for him. His staff had come in an hour before and were asleep on the floor. The bulk of the troops were still out on the road; they had to be brought in, built up into an army, and started again on their march southward. This was a heavy day's work, but it was not an impossible one; the men were unbeaten—

their General had told them so and they believed him,



'His staff were asleep on the floor.'

for they saw that he was unbeaten himself. His divisional commanders and brigadiers were worthy of him; they had worked magnificently all night

and their regimental officers had backed them magnificently in turn. In one of the finest narratives of the retreat [1] there is a story which tells us just what we should wish to know about our men and their officers—how even in the hardest times they can keep their kindliness and self-restraint. 'Soon after sunrise we came up with two of our ambulance wagons, and one of our filter water-carts. The wounded were in such a state of exhaustion with the long trek and the awful jolting of the wagons, that Major Fawcett decided to find some farm where water could be boiled. He had hardly gone when a battalion of exhausted infantry came up, and, as soon as they saw the water-carts, made a dash for them. Hastily I rode up to them and told them that there was very little water left in the carts, and that it was needed for their wounded comrades. "I am thirsty myself," I said, "and I am awfully sorry for you chaps, but you see how it is; the wounded must come first." "Quite right, Sir," was the ready response; "didn't know it was a hospital water-cart." And without a murmur they went thirsty on their way.'

Meanwhile, in St. Quentin, the General was busier and cheerier than ever. Our American volunteer saw a great deal of him this day, for he and his car were lent to him by Lord Loch. He says, 'It was good to see Smith-Dorrien's face and hear his voice. I had heard much of him during those days and never was he spoken of save in terms of affection. . . . It was of inestimable value that morning in St. Quentin—Smith-Dorrien's smile. It put heart into many a man. . . . It was a treat to watch the General.

[1] Quoted by Mr. John Buchan, *History of the War*, vol. ii.

Kindly and cheery, his personality pervaded everything about him. . . . Staff, officers, soldiers, everyone —all were parts of the whole. It was a lesson, watching him saving the scattered pieces of his corps and welding them into a fighting force that would be all the better for the awful experience through which they had passed.'

This last bit sounds an optimistic opinion, but it is strongly confirmed by a remark of Lieutenant Longman's, in a letter written a day or two later. 'At first my shoulders used to get rather tired with my load; now I have nearly doubled the load and don't feel it, and I can keep going all day quite happily and if necessary most of the night. Most of the men are very fit too. I would much rather go into action with the twenty men I have left than the fifty-nine I started with, as I can trust all of them to the last inch now, and before there were some semi-shirkers and many unfit.' Two-thirds of the platoon gone—that was a dangerously high rate of loss, if it was anything like general. The first reports which came in caused Sir Horace great anxiety; the 3rd Division alone believed their casualties to be 150 officers and over 5,000 other ranks. Another constant worry was the false news of rearguards hard pressed and throwing in their last reserves. Captain Bowley was sent back in the car to ascertain the facts and reported all the stories to be untrue. Altogether the day was a trying one to the nerves, and many officers felt it severely after the long bombardment of the day before, and the still longer march. The worst moment of all came late at night.

On this night, the 27th, the troops reached Ham. The retreat was not over, but the danger point was past. The enemy had hovered about the rearguards with cavalry and horse artillery, but his infantry had been too heavily punished to come on again; Smith-Dorrien had snatched their chance from them. It is impossible to overestimate his achievement. 'The extrication of the Le Cateau army,' says Lord Ernest Hamilton,[1] 'from a position which on paper was all but hopeless, was undoubtedly a very fine piece of generalship.' And Mr. John Buchan says: 'No praise can be too high for the services rendered by the Commander of the 2nd Corps at Le Cateau.' The voice of the army is not less emphatic. One of Sir Horace's own Generals wrote: 'If the staff work went smoothly and well, it was *only* because we had a chief *who knew his own mind*, never hesitated about momentous decisions (Le Cateau at 4 A.M. !), but shouldered all responsibility and never fussed. I have since then often talked with other staffs, and have realised how they have been hampered even in the smallest routine work, and it has made me very grateful to the finest Commander I have ever worked under.' Finally Sir John French wrote in his despatch: 'I say without hesitation that the saving of the left wing of the army under my command on the morning of August 26 could never have been accomplished unless a Commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity and determination had been present to personally conduct the operation.'

In our military history we have long kept one

[1] *The First Seven Divisions*, p. 65.

picture apart from all the rest—the great Duke riding in twilight behind the 52nd as they made the final advance across the field of Waterloo. We shall never see a moment of more complete triumph. But we have now another picture to set beside that—the quiet indomitable figure in the rain, facing the full stream of defeat. A very different scene, but the two go well together; for they both show what the spirit of man can do against material odds.

4. The Turn of the Tide

When the turn of the tide comes it is not at first perceptible, and in the Great Retreat there were probably few who realised the coming change when the troops began their weary tramp again at 4.30 A.M. on Friday, August 28. The officers, especially those of the different staffs, were haggard and worn; the men lame and grumbling. But with the British soldier grumbling is not akin to demoralisation; on the contrary, it is often a form of humour, and nearly always a proof of normal health. Mr. Coleman, who was carefully observing the 2nd Corps on this day, remarks that he had no hallucination of the army being a beaten one. 'The spirit of the men alone made it impossible to describe them as beaten.' The more he saw of them the more convinced he became of their invincibility.

Sir Horace himself got the same impression. He had the satisfaction—only given to real leaders—of seeing his men answer to his call like a pack of well-bred hounds. He spent hours among them, talking to them in the tone they knew and trusted, a tone confident and

uplifting, but quiet and entirely free from any trace of persuasiveness or exaggeration. In their different way, officers and men give exactly the same account of its effect. One more thing they noted especially—their General treated them like men of sense, who might reasonably wish to know what they were doing. He explained to them the strategical plan of the French Generalissimo, and as the day went on a feeling spread that in the four days' fighting, and even in the retirement itself, the British force had not been unsuccessful but most gallantly successful. So their pride came back to them, and they in their turn cheered and encouraged their General. It was a fine thing for him to see their unbroken spirit and their anxiety to show up well before him; most of all he admired the splendid appearance and march discipline of the Artillery. The 15th Brigade had lost all their guns except two; but they had some magnificent fighting to remember, and they held their heads up, as well they might. Everything was in place, everything in parade order; they made a brave show, and at such times a brave show is the best of reinforcements.

The Oise was to have been reached this day; but the enemy's cavalry and horse artillery bothered the rear-guards a good deal, and there were still a certain number of stragglers to be got in. This was work for the cavalry and they did it wonderfully, keeping the enemy back beyond St. Quentin till the last possible moment. The final sweep up was made late in the afternoon by Major Tom Bridges of the 4th Dragoon Guards, a tall soldier with a fine record. In the market-place at St. Quentin he found some hundreds of men lying helpless

on the ground, dead to the world ; they were the broken remnants of two good regiments, in need of food and sleep and still more in need of someone to wake the spirit that was sleeping in them. It seemed a desperate case, for they were past hearing the word of command or of persuasion.

When the reason is out of action, you must call to something deeper, more instinctive. Everyone who has ever marched to a band knows how music adds to your marching power without your thinking of it. Though the War Office had forgotten this, Major Bridges had not. He looked about St. Quentin, found a toy shop, bought a toy drum and two penny whistles, got two of his men to play the whistles and fastened the drum to his own belt. Then he paraded in the square, playing 'the British Grenadiers,' not probably with a very rich tone but in exact and spirited time. The beat of it got into the dead men's pulses and made them soldiers again. They staggered up and followed the toy band out of the town, and down the long dark road towards Noyon. When they were far on their way and marching well, their drummer thought he might safely leave them. 'I must go back to my own men,' he said. 'You go straight on, you are all right now.' But this was asking too much : they knew well enough what was lifting their feet every step of the way over those cobblestones. The drum, no doubt—but who could believe in the drum without the drummer ? It had come at his word from nowhere and might be gone again into nothing if he left them. They refused to march without him. He did not leave them ; he drummed them right into the town, got them fed and billeted and finished his own night upon the road.

Meanwhile the Staff had reached Cuts at half-past eight and were preparing for the almost forgotten luxury

'The beat of it got into the dead men's pulses.'

of a night's rest. Sir Horace himself had not averaged two hours' sleep in the six days. To-night he had four hours in a beautiful château; and his anxieties were much diminished. But the next day was to be a busy

one. The General's first business was to withdraw his 3rd and 4th Divisions across the Oise. The enemy were, of course, trying to press them. Our aeroplanes reported large columns on the move, and about 11 A.M. heavy firing was heard to the N.N.E. and E. De Lisle's cavalry brigade had already been attacked near Plessis, between Ham and Guiscard. Their commander dismounted them south of the latter town and left them with some guns to hold the German advance, while he himself came to report. Sir Horace sent back two infantry brigades to support him, and after a fine little action of three hours the enemy were beaten off.

During the day General Pulteney and his staff came up. They were to take over the command of the 3rd Army Corps, which at present consisted only of the 4th Division and the 19th Brigade. Sir Horace arranged to hand over these troops next day, and then went off to Compiègne to General Headquarters, where Sir John French wished to see him. There he found also General Allenby, Sir Douglas Haig, and General Joffre himself. The Generalissimo was under the impression that a French attack near St. Quentin had been successful. Sir Horace returned to Cuts at dark, and found a humorous little surprise waiting for him—rather like the one at Bavai. He had intended to sleep in the château again and start at dawn; but his energetic Chief of Staff, by way of saving time, had already packed up and was moving Headquarters back to a farm at Les Loges, some six miles in the rear. This was so obviously right that there was nothing to do but accept the arrangement, with suitable comments.

On Sunday, August 30, Sir Horace blew up all the bridges over the Oise, and withdrew his corps to the line of the Aisne. At the first cross-roads he himself met the 4th Division, and told them the good news that the French were now coming into line. This, of course, raised hopes of a stand being made at last, and the troops broke into a cheer, which was perhaps as fine a farewell testimonial as any General ever received. Sir Horace then went down to Berneuil and saw them cross the Aisne, after which they passed from his command. That night he slept at Haute-la-Fontaine.

The 31st was an anxious day. Aeroplanes reported large columns of the enemy advancing north of Compiègne. The retirement had now to be conducted through a country full of deep wooded ravines and very steep roads, and some of the troops took a wrong turn. The heat, too, was tremendous; but, in spite of all, the men were reported to be improving every day.

At 3 A.M., on the morning of September 1, a Frenchman came in to 2nd Corps Headquarters and told Sir Horace that he had counted forty German guns and a large force of Uhlans moving at 1.30 A.M. through a village about five miles off, in the direction of the 3rd Army Corps, and this proved to be true. At daylight the 1st Cavalry Brigade, under General Briggs, found itself in bivouac at Néry within 400 yards of these Germans, and with their own guns—L Battery, R.H.A.—close by them in an orchard, a position not intended for fighting. The Bays and 11th Hussars at once took cover and opened fire with rifles and machine guns; but the German artillery was already in action and in a very short time

smashed up all but one of our guns and concentrated their whole fire on the last remaining one. Their cavalry at the same time worked round to the south of the village and occupied a sugar factory.

But the game was not yet over, though the guns in action were now twelve to one. The 5th Dragoon Guards got round to the north-east and opened fire on the enemy's flank. Then at 8 A.M. the 4th Cavalry Brigade, followed by the Middlesex Regiment, came hurrying towards the sound of the firing. The combined fire of these regiments, with that of their fresh Horse Artillery, was too hot for the German gunners. They tried to withdraw their guns, but paid a heavy price for saving four of them, and had to abandon the other eight. As they retired, the heroes of L Battery were still firing at them, though Captain Bradbury, all his officers, and 80 per cent. of his men, were killed or wounded. Sergeant-Major Dorrell and Sergeant Nelson were left in command, and they and their dead Captain were all awarded the Victoria Cross. The fight ended with a pursuit by C Squadron of the 11th Hussars, who charged through the enemy's abandoned guns and captured a number of prisoners and led horses. On the following day they followed up the trail on their way south, and in a ride of the forest of Ermenonville came on a lot of German equipment and the four remaining guns.

Sir Horace now asked Sir Charles Fergusson to send a brigade towards Néry to help the 3rd Division to withdraw, and this was successfully accomplished. At the same time General Cuthbert, with the 13th Brigade, beat off a rear-guard attack, getting into the enemy's infantry well with his artillery. Sir Horace, as he

watched the fighting at Levignon under a blazing sun, received a private telegram from England. It had been sent off only that morning and was a welcome proof that the communications with England were being admirably kept up in spite of difficulties. Headquarters that night were at Nanteuil-le-Haudouin, in a house prepared for a hospital; and news came in of an attack on the rear-guard of the 1st Corps at Villers-Cotterets, handsomely beaten off by the 4th Guards Brigade.

On September 2, the start was earlier still. The troops began to move at 2 A.M. and the General himself was off by 3. Before the heat of the day the troops had reached their halting place on the line St. Soupplets-Étrepilly; and from his Headquarters at Monthyon, Sir Horace had a fine view looking right across to the forts of Paris, the nearest of which was only 11 miles distant. French reserves and cavalry were at St. Soupplets, and the French 7th Army Corps was engaging the German 1st Army. A crisis seemed to be near, and now that we know what was the real state of affairs it is interesting to compare the impressions of our men at the front with those of their friends at home. Exaggerated reports had reached London, representing the retirement as not merely a retreat but a rout; and the fall of Paris was thought to be inevitable. It happened that afternoon that two poets were walking together down a quiet by-street in Westminster, when a Government official overtook them and told them in confidence that the French Government were to leave Paris that night. The poets went their way in silence. Presently the younger of them, who was specially interested in naval matters, said suddenly: 'If they

get Paris, they'll demand the French Fleet as ransom!' The older poet, who knew better than anyone how this country had had to face mad dynasts in the past, said grimly: 'Then it only remains for us to keep them out of these islands, as we did before.' It would be idle to deny that they thought the outlook a dark one.

How very different it would have appeared to them if they could have planed over to France, and looked in, as we can now look in, upon the conference going on at that very moment in the British General Headquarters at Lagny. There we see Sir Horace with Sir John French, not in the least troubled about Paris, but busily planning to cross next day to the south bank of the Marne. This was a difficult operation, involving a flank march in face of the enemy; but Sir Horace was undertaking it with complete confidence and cheerfulness, justified by his experience of the still greater difficulties which he and his men had successfully come through. It was a wonderful report that he was able to give. His troops, it is true, were very short of equipment and of entrenching tools—over 80 per cent. of these had been lost at Le Cateau, and the fresh stores, to the amount of 70,000 tons, were still at sea, on the way to our new base at St. Nazaire. But it was impossible, he said, not to be struck by the splendid way in which all the rear road services were being conducted—the supply columns, ammunition columns and mechanical transport vehicles continued, in spite of everything, to arrive regularly. The General Staff work of the 2nd Corps was quite excellent, though probably since the days of Sir John Moore no Staff had ever been so highly tried. The Divisional Commanders, Fergusson and Hamilton, had the perfect confidence of their General, whom they had

never failed for a moment. Lastly, the men had entirely recovered their spirits; they were getting fitter every day and wanted nothing but the order to go forward and attack. That order was to come sooner than they expected.

Next day, September 3, was spent in crossing the Marne and blowing up the bridges. The enemy not only failed to interfere, but were reported by our aeroplanes to be giving up the pursuit and moving off to the east towards Château Thierry, apparently to attack the French army next on our right. By midday on the 4th one German corps was crossing the Marne at La Ferté, six miles in front of Sir Horace. He did not feel sure what they were doing, but he was prepared to rest his left flank on the Paris forts and give them battle with every confidence, for he knew now how tired they were and how heavily they had been losing. At 3.30 P.M. he met the Commander-in-Chief at Sir Douglas Haig's Headquarters and discussed the whole plan of campaign. This was for him a memorable interview: Sir John French once more praised him highly for the way in which he had extricated his force, and also for the severe blow he had inflicted on the enemy by deciding to stand and fight at Le Cateau on August 26. He ended by assuring Sir Horace of his absolute confidence in him; and as Sir Horace had the same absolute confidence in his own officers, and they again in their men, it was clear that the army was a true army and in the best possible fighting condition.

The troops marched again the same evening to avoid the heat, which was very trying to both men and horses. The General and his staff dined at Crécy—

not of course the Black Prince's Crécy, but still a name of good omen—and arrived late at night before the Château de Villepateur near Presle, only to find it locked

'This was for him a memorable interview.'

and deserted. The agent was discovered and knocked up and at midnight the house was opened. None of those who slept in that château will ever forget it, for it was there that they first heard beyond doubt of the turn of the tide. On September 5 the troops were

resting all day, and Sir Archibald Murray came over to tell Sir Horace that General Joffre was ordering a general offensive for next morning. The 2nd Corps was to get on to the line Houssaye-Villeneuve; the French 6th Army were moving eastwards on the north of the Marne and would be at Lizy-sur-Ourcq by 9 A.M., while on Haig's right the French 5th Army would advance north at 5 A.M. In fact the two French armies formed an angle with the British Army at the apex, joining them, and inside the angle were von Kluck and von Buelow with six or seven German army corps. The retreat had drawn them down into this trap, and they would have to resist very stoutly if they were to escape being squeezed by the two sides of the angle closing in on them.

A great deal of surprise was caused among the military critics by this situation. They could not understand what was von Kluck's motive for suddenly turning eastwards on September 3, and marching across the British front to attack the French. Different theories were put forward—one was that he had never suspected the existence of the 6th French Army near Paris, and turned away to avoid it. Another story was that the Crown Prince was in great danger to the east, and had to be rescued at any risk. The French 'Official Review of the First Six Months of the War' states quite plainly that the object of the 1st German Army was first to envelop the Allies' left, and that when it had overshot the mark in this attempt, its second aim was to cut the French armies off from Paris and invest the capital. It is satisfactory to note that it fell to the lot of the British Army to upset both these plans. Smith-Dorrien's generalship made it

impossible to envelop the left of the Allied line, and afterwards von Kluck's move to cut off the French from Paris was spoiled by the fact that the British Army filled the gap between. There is little doubt that he believed them out of action and thought he could march across their front with impunity. He would not have made that mistake if he could have been in our lines on September 5 and seen Sir Horace visiting his Divisions and giving them the welcome news of the coming advance.

5. The Battles of the Marne and Aisne

On Sunday, September 6, day broke upon a joyful army; the news of the advance was visibly coming true. The 2nd Corps was moving north-east towards Coulommiers on the Grand Morin. Sir Horace's Headquarters were to be at the Château de Combreux, near Tournan; and there during the morning he received a visit from Sir John French, who repeated, what no one could hear too often, that the general advance had begun and that the German 2nd and 3rd Corps were retiring before our troops. The news still seemed almost incredible. 'Thank goodness! we are advancing,' wrote one of the Staff in his notebook; he could not disbelieve the Commander-in-Chief in person. Sir John himself was in very good spirits, and told Sir Horace once more, at this appropriate moment, that his determined action in fighting at Le Cateau had saved the whole situation, and that he was recognising the fact in his despatch. The 2nd Corps continued to advance during the afternoon; they had no fighting, but the march was a thrilling one, for news came in that the 3rd and 5th Cavalry Brigades were in action

near Pezarches, and that the 6th and 5th French Armies on our left and right were heavily engaged and gaining ground.

On Monday the 7th, Sir Horace's Staff had a new experience. Headquarters were moved to a château which had been occupied by a German General, and the first sight of the enemy's traces was not a pleasant one. The house had been left in so filthy a condition that, after an effort to clean it, the A.D.C.'s had to give it up and move to another at Faremoutiers, which was a little better. It may be remarked here, once for all, that although the Germans have the reputation of being clean and decent in their own homes, their treatment of houses occupied on campaign is often so wantonly beastly as to suggest insanity.

There was more fighting to-day; the German rear-guard tried to stop McCracken's (7th) Brigade at Coulommiers. Of the four battalions, the 3rd Worcesters, 1st Wiltshires and 2nd Royal Irish Rifles were not hard hit, but the South Lancashires had a good many casualties. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade were fortunate in having another chance—this time at the enemy's cavalry. The first Garde Dragoner Regiment had a rear-guard in the village of Montcel and there they were marked by the 9th Lancers, a troop of whom charged at once and cleared them out. The enemy were then reinforced by two fresh squadrons from the north and one from the west of the village. Colonel David Campbell was on the south-west with his Adjutant, Captain Reynolds, and a troop and a half of his men—less than 50 in all. The Germans were double that number and they were evidently meaning to hold their ground. The 9th went at them at full gallop and passed right through them,

losing a few men but pegging twice as many, and successfully joining their other troop behind the village. Colonel Campbell and Captain Reynolds were both among the wounded.

The Germans now made a fatal blunder; some of them wasted time galloping into the village and back again, and they then began to retire slowly towards the north. A disagreeable surprise was waiting for them. Colonel Burnett had by this time got round to their rear with a squadron of the 18th Hussars; he had dismounted his men and posted them with rifles and a machine gun among some corn stooks. The retiring enemy had to pass right along their field of fire; 70 Dragoner tried a charge, but were wiped out at 100 yards' range—the rest fled, leaving their wounded on the ground.

Early on the morning of the 8th, Sir Horace was informed by his aeroplanes that just in front of him, at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, on the Marne, there was a tremendous mass of German wagons, guns, and men, trying to get over the river. His orders were to advance on Château Thierry and reach the Marne, if possible, but the country near the Petit Morin is broken and covered with trees, so that it was easy for even weak rear-guards to hold up the pursuit. For instance, Doran's (8th) Brigade—the 2nd Royal Scots, 2nd Royal Irish, 4th Middlesex, and 1st Gordons—had great difficulty in crossing the Petit Morin in face of a battery of machine guns on the opposite side till, after J Battery, R.H.A., had shelled the position, the Royal Scots and Middlesex made a fine charge down and up, and captured the six machine guns and 200 prisoners.

At 3 P.M. Sir John French came to Coulommiers,

well pleased with the way things were going, but naturally regretting the rapidity of the German retreat. After his departure Sir Horace went out to the front and found Sir Charles Fergusson north of St. Cyr. His troops had rounded up some Uhlans, but were prevented from advancing more quickly by the fire of some of our own artillery firing heavily from the right. They were very keen and fit, transformed by their successful march and a week of comparatively regular meals and sleep. 'One realises more and more,' wrote a young officer at this time, 'that on this kind of show one's feelings and moods are purely reactions of the stomach. If I have eight meals a day, then for eight hours at least during that day everything seems rosy. If I go short of food for a day, no rumour is too gloomy to be true. A little brandy makes one think of home and the extreme probability of being there within a week—a *very* little will have this result—and last night my tot of rum made me feel quite poetical, and a smoky fire that smelt abominably of burnt bacon fat seemed to be quite a romantic camp fire.'

By nightfall the 2nd Corps had gained the south bank of the Marne; the General's Headquarters were at Doué, in a house evacuated by the enemy. As before, 'it took a lot of cleaning.'

The morning of the 9th was rainy. Fergusson and Hamilton advanced to cross the Marne at 5 A.M. They had had an unexpected piece of luck overnight in finding the bridges intact, and to-day they were able to get on faster than either the 1st or 3rd Corps. Sir Horace went out to see General Pulteney and the 3rd Corps, who were to cross at Ferté-sous-Jouarre, but were held up by broken bridges and by artillery

and machine-gun fire. Sir Horace offered to help by pushing troops in between Fergusson and the 3rd Corps; but General Pulteney thought they could manage it alone. At this moment Sir John French came up, and expressed his pleasure at the rapid advance of the 2nd Corps. They were, in fact, enjoying their first success. The Royal Fusiliers ran right into a German convoy. 'Their guns and cavalry,' says Lieutenant Longman, 'cleared off at once, and the infantry—four battalions—were left behind to let the luggage escape. These we practically surrounded, and killed a large number, and captured I believe about 1,500. Most of the baggage escaped, with the exception of twelve wagons which the artillery bagged. This is the first real victory we have had.' About the same time Shaw's (9th) Brigade were delayed by some German guns on the heights above Nanteint, and the 1st Lincolns, after a fine fight in which they exterminated the gunners, captured the battery entire. The Cornwalls had a stiff fight in the woods before Montreuil, but the place was taken after dark by Cuthbert's (13th) Brigade. Finally, the British advance began to tell on the general position, for the two and a half German corps facing the 6th French Army on the Ourcq thought it wise to retire, as our army was uncomfortably near their flank. Sir Horace and his staff slept that night at Saacy.

The 10th was a great day for our men, and a very bad one for the Germans, who began to show signs of being rattled. The early morning was wet, and the 3rd Corps were still behind; they had spent most of the night in repairing the bridge at La Ferté[1] and

[1] La Ferté, like Crécy, was a name of good omen. In the days of the Black Prince the castle of Sir James Audley, the hero of Poitiers, stood here.

getting across it, but by midday they had caught up and the 1st and 2nd Corps were going hard ahead, in spite of the wet roads and the deep valleys. Sir Horace noted that the horses were much tired by the bad going, whereas the men seemed to improve in health and spirits, and were in fine fighting fettle. His cavalry —the 3rd and 5th Brigades under Hubert Gough and Chetwode—were reported to be enjoying themselves thoroughly, driving back the enemy and collecting stragglers. There were many woods in the line of march, all full of skulkers, and infantry battalions as well as cavalry were beating them up in every direction. The total bag of the 2nd Corps for the day was 2,000 prisoners, besides 'an enormous number' killed. The roads were a good sight to men who had done a retreat themselves only a fortnight before; haversacks and equipment lay about in heaps, with dead horses and men scattered among them. The enemy's troops of all arms were suffering worse than ours had done, and satisfaction at this was only natural. By a stroke of good luck the King's congratulations to the 2nd Corps reached the General to-day, and were received with enthusiasm.

The 11th was a more difficult day. General Joffre had ordered the British army to move north-east instead of north, and had also narrowed our front. This gave only two roads between three divisions, and made progress slow. The weather, too, was very thick, and turned to heavy rain, so that aeroplanes could not go up to reconnoitre. Also the sudden change to cold and wet made Sir Horace tremble for the health of his troops, many of whom had no greatcoats, waterproof sheets, or change of clothing. These things had

been abandoned after Le Cateau and fresh supplies had not yet got through from our new base. Even the fresh men and guns to repair losses, which were said to have been 'already made good' by August 29, were not actually received till September 19; at this moment the 2nd Corps was still forty-two guns short, and though more German guns than that had now been captured, they were not available for use.

Still the day was not unproductive; the cavalry put in some pretty work, and many stragglers surrendered. The increasing demoralisation of the German rear-guards, even when composed of picked troops, was shown by an amusing episode. Lord Stanley, the young officer who was acting as extra A.D.C. to Sir Horace, was in charge of the led horses of the staff—about twenty in number, with ten grooms. He came upon a detachment of Germans who were evidently far behind their corps, and though they greatly outnumbered his men he ordered an immediate advance upon them. They showed no fight but threw up their hands and surrendered in batches; and Lord Stanley found to his astonishment that with ten grooms he had captured 106 men and 4 officers of the Prussian Guard. This adventure, which was called 'Stanley's charge,' caused immense satisfaction and amusement. The grooms came in to Headquarters laden with spoils; Major Hope Johnstone's servant arrived hung round with helmets and equipment 'like a Christmas tree,' and was able to supply his master with a German automatic pistol in place of a revolver which had been lost. And when all the laughter was over, there remained the solid fact that Stanley had shown great decision and brought off a smart stroke.

Headquarters that night were at Rozet St. Albin, in a château belonging to the family of Berthier, Napoleon's Chief of Staff. The corrected list of casualties for the last two days came in; the 2nd Corps had lost 3 officers killed, 15 wounded, and 4 missing, and of other ranks 17 killed, 384 wounded and 69 missing. Considering the hardness of the fighting and the enormous losses of the Germans, the General considered that his men had come off well.

On the 12th the orders were to advance to the River Aisne and cross it. The advance was successful. Allenby's cavalry occupied Braisne and was supported there by the 3rd Division; Gough then seized the high ground close to the river at Chassemy and fell upon some German infantry, of whom he killed 70 and captured 150. But the crossing was impossible for to-day; the bridge at Vailly was strongly held by machine-guns; the bridge at Missy was reconnoitred by Lieutenant Pennycuick, R.E., who with great skill and courage floated down to within 150 yards of it and reported it to be badly destroyed. Night fell in torrents of rain.

But the army had no intention of being stopped by a river, even a deep river nearly two hundred feet wide. During that stormy night the 11th Brigade of the 3rd Corps succeeded in ferrying some men across near Venizel. At dawn the 11th and 12th Brigades managed to cross and establish themselves at Bucy-le-Long. Sir Horace went to a point near Venizel to watch the operations. Cuthbert's (13th) Brigade failed to cross at Missy, but Rolt's (14th) and Gleichen's (15th) eventually got over at Moulin des Roches, crossing man by man on a single line of planks, while the guns were

passed over the railway bridge. On the right Hubert Hamilton succeeded in getting two brigades across after dark; the 1st Corps and the French 5th Army also got over, and part of the 6th Army. Happily it was a fine drying day and the food supplies came up splendidly in spite of the bad roads.

That evening, the 13th, Sir Horace went to see the Commander-in-Chief at Fère-en-Tardenoise. The next day, the 14th, he went again, and reported that the enemy were making a stand on the heights north of the Aisne, and had been sending back reinforcements both of infantry and artillery, and entrenching with barbed wire. General Wilson, who had seen General Joffre the day before, gave a cheering account of his confidence, and of the report of a French corps commander away on our right, who had buried 9,000 Germans in a single day.

This stand of the Germans proved to be something more than a rear-guard action; the battle of the Aisne had now begun, in the position selected and prepared beforehand by the enemy. It continued for the rest of the month, and though it died down into a siege it cannot be said to have had any decisive end. The fact is that the enemy had from the first intended only to use the line of the Aisne as a holding position, and to throw their real force against the Allied left, in accordance with their one idea of strategy—the outflanking movement. General Joffre perceived this, or rather anticipated it; for as early as September 11th he had begun strengthening his left, and on the 17th he ordered a special force to be constituted 'capable of coping with the outflanking movement of the enemy.' The Battle of the Aisne therefore developed as a series of local

attacks on both sides, and Sir Horace on the 14th received definite orders to limit his operations to such local offensives. These blows and counter-blows were on the whole much in our favour; but in spite of heavy losses the German line remained practically unmoved, and our own casualties were not inconsiderable. Sir John French told Sir Horace on the 19th that they had already reached 10,000 in the week.

On the 20th, McCracken's (7th) Brigade were heavily attacked. They drove the enemy off gallantly, but lost fifteen officers and three hundred men in doing it. Sir Horace, who had watched the fight from Fergusson's position on the Serches plateau, at once arranged for the battalions which had suffered most to be relieved by others from the 16th Brigade, which belonged to the 6th Division, but had been temporarily taken under Sir Horace's command. During the night McCracken's remaining regiment—the 1st Wiltshires—made a spirited advance and cleared some woods with the bayonet, finding as they did so a large number of dead Germans whom they had killed in the day's fighting.

On the 21st, Sir Horace received some remarkable reports. A very gallant young Engineer officer, Lieutenant Hutton, of General Hamilton's Signal Company, had been drowned on the night of the 19th, while swimming across the Aisne with a wire, to establish communication between the north bank and Divisional Headquarters. Then a French farmer, in the position held by the 1st Corps, had been found with a telephone in his house communicating all our movements to the Germans. He had 50,000 francs on his person—the price of his treason—and was one of fifteen spies shot in two days. Thirdly, McCracken's Brigade had been

again attacked, and though they easily repulsed the enemy, the casualties of the 3rd Division for the day amounted to twenty-five officers and five hundred men. The disagreeable part of this, they reported, was not the

'Rushed straight up the hill, officers leading.'

fighting but the impossibility of burying the German dead in front of our trenches—in one place they were piled up three deep, only eighty yards away, and they lay there for days and weeks. Lastly, news came from the 1st Corps of a German attack on the trenches of the West Yorkshires—the only one of their attacks which was even temporarily successful. The full account of this Sir Horace heard on a later day, when he had gone

over to visit his own old regiment, the Sherwood Foresters. It appeared that the West Yorkshires, who had only taken over the trenches the night before, were severely attacked by German machine guns and infantry, while their right flank was exposed by the absence of some Zouaves next to them, who were back at their dinner. The Yorkshires, being heavily enfiladed, were driven back and some of them were captured. But down the steep slope behind were the Sherwood Foresters, lying down in reserve, and further to the right were the 4th Dragoon Guards, dismounted. There was no time to fall in—the two regiments sprang to their feet, and rushed straight up the hill, officers leading. The Sherwood Foresters retook the Yorkshire trenches with the bayonet, but they lost no less than fourteen officers in their magnificent charge. The 4th Dragoon Guards, headed by their Commander, Major Tom Bridges, at the same moment retook the trenches on the right, and the Zouaves came scurrying back from dinner in time to do some useful bayonet work. A heavy fire was then opened on the retreating Germans, and they in revenge were seen to turn on their prisoners and shoot them down. Sir Horace was much impressed by this last incident, related to him by an eye-witness, and he afterwards repeated it to his own troops, warning them against entrusting themselves to the Germans, under any circumstances.

6. The Fight for Calais

We have seen that the French were now forming new armies to the north-west, to meet the German outflanking movement. Towards the end of September it was agreed between General Joffre and Sir John French that

a further development of the line should be made by sending the whole British force up to the north, and placing it on the extreme French left, where it would be nearer England and have a clear line of communications. The position on the Aisne would, of course, be taken over by French reserves.

The 2nd Army Corps was to begin the move. Accordingly, during the night of October 2, Sir Horace withdrew his troops from the trenches, and on the following night they marched for an unknown destination. October 4, the day of his own departure, was marked by a pleasant incident. The beautiful château which had been his Headquarters on the Aisne belonged to a French lady, Mademoiselle de Louvencourt. On this very morning she came home to take up her residence there and look after her own people. Her first *déjeuner* in the house was the last for Sir Horace and his staff. They greatly appreciated her courage and kindness, and she was full of regret that she had not been at home to look after them all the time. At 6 P.M. they left and motored 50 miles through the moonlit forest to Verberie, passing our troops on the march.

On October 5 the troops started entraining at Port St. Maxence and Compiègne, and two intermediate stations. Everything was extraordinarily well arranged by the French staff; and troops, wagons, guns and horses were all got off very quickly. The entrainment occupied three days—for the whole corps, with its divisional ammunition and two days' reserve pack for supplies, took no less than eighty trains, which were got off at the rate of one every hour.

On October 7 Sir Horace followed his troops, motoring eighty miles to Abbeville. He found Generals

Fergusson and Hamilton already at the detraining point, digging out their men and getting them into fighting formation. His Headquarters were fixed in a girls' boarding-school. That evening only the mistresses were in the house; but on October 8, being the first day of the winter term, the young ladies all arrived, escorted by their mothers, who had not heard that the town was full of troops and the school given up to British officers. There was a cheerful scene, and the ladies gracefully retired from the position.

During the night the troops began their march for the front and did about fourteen miles. But this was not fast enough for the French, who needed a covering force on their flank at once. General Joffre offered some of his motor-buses, and sent enough of them to carry 8,000 infantry at a time. This saved our men a twenty-mile tramp, but of course the mounted troops and transport had to march. Sir Horace himself, after seeing Sir John French, motored on to Hesdin, where he was billeted in a very old house, hung with fine old tapestry and inhabited by two very old ladies who were indignant at having their seclusion invaded by the necessity of war.

On October 11 the movement was completed, and Sir Horace got his corps into the assigned position between Aire and Bethune. On the 12th, General Pulteney was also up and moving on Hazebrouck with the 3rd Corps. But in the meantime the fall of Antwerp on the night of the 9th had set free large German forces. They followed hard on the retirement of our 7th Division, and even thrust themselves into the eight-mile gap between Pulteney and Smith-Dorrien. It was evident that our men were barely in time to save the position,

and that the struggle would be a desperate one. The Germans were determined to reach Calais. Their first attempt was by way of La Bassée and Givenchy, their second by Ypres, and no two harder battles were ever fought. The La Bassée fight is that with which we are now concerned.

It began on October 12, when Sir Horace started on his gallant attempt to carry out the French plan for turning the enemy's flank. He attacked on both sides of the Canal, the 5th Division on the right, the 3rd on the left. The country was very difficult, being quite flat and intersected with dykes and high hedgerows. The dykes were crossed on planks, but the hedges made observation extremely difficult for the artillery. Still, at the cost of only three hundred casualties, some advance was made, the 3rd Division wheeling to the right upon the enemy's rear.

The 13th was a day of heavy rain and small progress. The 14th was, for Sir Horace, the saddest of the campaign. General Hubert Hamilton, commander of the 3rd Division, was walking out along the Richebourg road, to see his men entrenching on the line they had won, when a shell burst near him and a single shrapnel bullet struck his temple, killing him instantly. Captain Strutt, of the Royal Scots, who was with him, was knocked over at the same time, and shortly afterwards severely wounded by a second shell.

To a great nation no loss is irreparable, but few men could have been more lamented than Hubert Hamilton. To Sir Horace he was an exceptionally capable officer, a very old friend and a man after his own heart, indomitable and chivalrous. To his Division he was an inspiring leader, trusted with absolute confidence

by every man under his command. He was buried after dark, a mile from where he fell, and only half a mile behind our outposts. As the procession of staff officers, with Sir Horace among them, marched into the churchyard, a determined night attack was being made by the enemy all along the line, and the heavy fire of artillery and machine guns passed right over the church, making it very difficult for the Chaplain's voice to be heard distinctly. But he read on, and the words, though half lost, were never more impressive. Perhaps no British General since Sir John Moore has had so appropriate a funeral.

Next morning General Colin Mackenzie arrived to take Hamilton's place, and the 3rd Division, in the four days which followed, did honour to their dead leader's memory by the renewed brilliancy of their fighting. With their guns dispersed among the infantry, right up in the firing line, they drove the enemy out of entrenched positions and loopholed villages time after time—the Northumberlands, the Royal Fusiliers, the Royal Scots and the 4th Middlesex especially distinguishing themselves, advancing slowly but continuously, and finding great numbers of dead Germans in front of them. On the 17th, the 5th Division also made good progress. On the 18th, Rolt's (14th) Brigade got within half a mile of La Bassée. But the battle was becoming a costly one—the 2nd Corps had lost in the seven days' fighting 132 officers and 2,724 men—and though the Germans had suffered still more severely they were now being heavily reinforced, while Sir Horace had hardly even a reserve in hand.

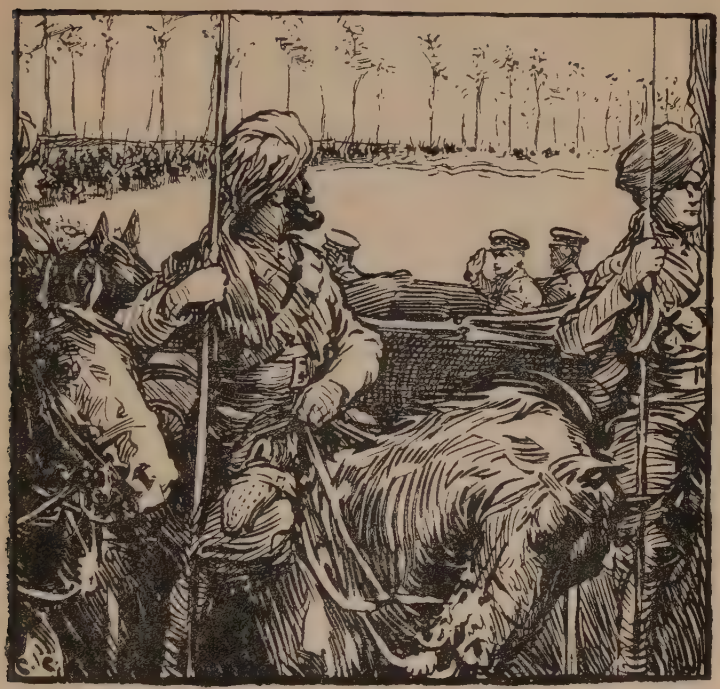
On the 19th, the Royal Irish Regiment under Major Daniell made a fine advance over 800 yards of open

ground and stormed the village of Le Pilly. Sir Horace saw that their position was too far advanced to be tenable; but before his order to withdraw could reach them, the enemy in overwhelming force rushed the place and captured or killed most of the regiment. From this time onwards it became more and more evident that the Germans were in greatly superior numbers, and bent on taking the offensive. Sir Horace could no longer hope to turn their flank or push them back, but he was determined that they should not break through his line, thin and worn though it was. Thus the attack on La Bassée had become the defence of Givenchy; a heroic and invincible defence, which may almost be called the death struggle of the 2nd Army Corps.

October 21 was an anxious day. Troops on Sir Horace's left were being drawn north to meet the German attack there, and the gap between the 2nd and 3rd Corps was thereby widened. This gap was partly filled by General Conneau's fine cavalry, but they were not strong enough to resist the tremendous pressure and were pushed back from Fromelles with heavy loss. The enemy in consequence took Violaines next day from the Cheshires and Dorsets, and also Rue du Marais, but lost this village again to a fine attack by the Manchesters and Worcesters. The Devons and Norfolks were forced back upon Givenchy, but there they made a resolute stand.

At noon the Commander-in-Chief sent for Sir Horace to come to Bailleul, to consult with him and with Generals Allenby and Pulteney. On his way Sir Horace passed through large bodies of Indian troops moving up to Bailleul, and with the other Generals he found

General Watkis, commanding the Lahore Division. Sir John French explained the general situation: the Germans were losing heavily to the 1st and 3rd Corps,



'Sir Horace passed through large bodies of Indian troops.'

and it was essential that the 2nd should hold on to enable other movements of troops to take place. Sir Horace received this order with the determination to carry it out at all costs. But on his return, his divisional commanders gave him a grave report. Their losses in ten days had been over 5,000, and the survivors,

especially in the 5th Division, were almost worn out with incessant fighting and digging. The enemy's force was increasing and another massed attack might break the line, which was now weakened by the retirement of Conneau's cavalry.

Sir Horace met the situation with characteristic efficiency. He had already been entrenching a strong second position in the rear, and to this he now ordered his troops to withdraw during the night. He also wrote instantly to the Commander-in-Chief at St. Omer. By 2 A.M. came the reply that Sir John was sending him all he could spare of the Lahore Division, under General Watkis, to be at Estaires about 8 A.M., but to be used only in case of urgent necessity.

October 23 was a more cheerful day. A detachment of the Cornwalls came in at dawn from the abandoned position and reported having seen a German attack with the bayonet, delivered quite successfully against our empty trenches. Good news of a more serious kind came in from the 1st Corps, and Sir Horace wired congratulations to Sir Douglas Haig. He then visited Sir John French at Estaires and inspected Conneau's picturesque Spahi cavalry.

On the 24th, the whole enemy gunfire seemed to be concentrated on the Indian troops. Sir Horace discovered the reason of this—our British men had all learned to take cover, but these haughty Indians were walking about in the most unconcerned way, rather enjoying being under shell fire, and Sir Horace had to point out to their General that much as he admired their bravery he must remind them that in this war, at any rate, it was important to conceal their position.

On the 25th, some trenches were abandoned by the

remnant of a famous regiment—one which had lost in August 80 per cent. of its numbers and all its officers but two or three, and ever since then had been fighting incessantly, with no time to recover or to train its fresh drafts. Sir Horace found it difficult to blame these worn-out men or their young and inexperienced officers; but he had an anxious day. At 11 o'clock he saw the Commander-in-Chief at Bailleul; he then went to find General Carnegy at Laventie, but the place had just been shelled and was totally deserted. He went on to see General Bowes, and heard that the 3rd Division had been driven in but had recovered their position in a fine charge by the 4th Middlesex. His next visit was to the Headquarters of the Lahore Division, where he found telegrams from the 15th Sikhs asking for reinforcements to make good heavy losses. He then went on to the Headquarters of the 5th Division, where General Morland gave him even a graver account than before. Sir Horace accordingly went in person to each of the three brigades and found that they had all repulsed severe attacks, but were desperately hard pressed. Colonel Ballard, of the Norfolks, was holding with great determination the main position of Givenchy which blocked the road westward. There, too, were the Devons; they had suffered enormously, especially in officers, but they were in their old die-hard mood, absolutely immovable, and a strong support to others. One of their officers, Lieutenant Quick, was killed on this day, while running over to the next regiment to tell them that they must hold on, for the Devons were determined to stick it out.

Sir Horace then went back to General Morland, gave him the only reserves he had, and sent a staff

officer to ask General Maud'hui for support. He ended the day by motoring to St. Omer to see Sir John French again, and got back to his own Headquarters at 2 A.M.

On the 26th, Givenchy was again attacked at dawn; but the Manchesters repulsed the enemy, and the French played up splendidly, sending in two battalions and two batteries of guns. Sir John French also sent two more batteries of 4·7 guns, and came over himself at 11 A.M. to promise Sir Horace the 2nd Cavalry Brigade and three more Indian batteries. Before these could arrive, however, the Germans shelled the 3rd Division heavily, drove the Royal Irish Rifles out of their trenches and occupied the village of Neuve Chapelle. Here again there was no blaming the troops—the gallant 7th Brigade were simply exhausted by hard fighting, heavy shell fire, and want of sleep. Sir Horace encouraged his officers with the true fighter's advice, to remember the enemy's losses rather than their own, and believe that they were even nearer the breaking-point.

Counter-attacks on Neuve Chapelle had begun at once, and on the 27th they were continued. But the 3rd Division were as tired as the 5th, and organisation was made difficult by the mixing up of different units and nationalities—the South Lancashires and Royal Fusiliers working with the 47th Sikhs, the French Chasseurs, and the 9th Bhopal Infantry. Colonel McMahon succeeded in clearing the north part of the village; but the German heavy guns smashed up the trenches held by the Wiltshires and the remnant of the Royal Irish Rifles, and then rushed them. When night fell, Neuve Chapelle was still in the enemy's hands, and our troops lay in a broken semicircle round the east, north, and west of it.

Meanwhile, however, Sir Horace had received an offer from General Conneau of a battalion of dismounted cavalry, 300 cyclists, and nine batteries of artillery, with 1600 more cavalry to follow. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade, under Colonel Mullens, had also arrived as promised; and, most wonderful to relate, the 5th Division had so beaten off the enemy that they were able to spare the Cornwalls, the Dorsets, and the Cheshires, to move up to the left of the line if required. These three battalions were now mere skeletons, but they had never lowered their colours for a moment. A fresh attack was arranged for next day; the conduct of it was given to General McCracken, and Sir Horace at 3 A.M. went back to his Headquarters to lie down for an hour or two.

At 8 A.M. on the 28th Sir James Willcocks, commanding the Indian troops, arrived. At 10 A.M. General Conneau came to see Sir Horace. It was always cheering to meet this splendid soldier, and to-day's visit was a typical proof of his spirit. He had just looked in to say that every French soldier under his command would willingly die in support of Sir Horace's corps. Conneau, like Maud'hui, Sordêt and Manoury, had clearly seen in Smith-Dorrien a spirit that matched the chivalry of France.

The attack on Neuve Chapelle was delayed by thick weather; but the bombardment was begun at 11 A.M. At noon Sir Horace met the Commander-in-Chief and Sir James Willcocks in Merville. Sir John was determined to give the 2nd Corps a rest, and for this purpose he was ordering the Indian troops to relieve them in the trenches; but the operation would be a very difficult one and could not be carried out at once. In the meantime the attack went forward, and was partially success-

ful. The 47th Sikhs and the 9th Bhopals made a very

'The 47th Sikhs and the 9th Bhopals made a very fine charge.'

fine charge, the Sikhs especially distinguishing themselves in hand-to-hand fighting in the village; but the Germans succeeded in retaking most of the place during

the evening. The Royal West Kents at the south-east corner were the only troops who were still holding on there; and close to them were the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The losses for the day were very heavy—65 officers and 1466 men, bringing the total for this battle up to 358 officers and 8204 men.

On the 29th, Sir Horace spent much time with Sir Archibald Murray, the Chief of the Staff, Sir James Willcocks, and General Morland, in arranging for the relief of his corps. In the meantime the 5th Division were heavily attacked, but they successfully repulsed any advance. The Manchesters lost a trench in the early fog, but retook it with the bayonet, killing 70 Germans and capturing many more. The West Kents, who had lost in the three days over 300 men and all their officers but two, had never yielded an inch of ground, though more than once completely enfiladed. The Devons, too, had paid a high price for Givenchy and the 'Glory of the West'; but they too had won, and the whole Division cheered them when they came back.

On the evening of this day the Battle of Neuve Chapelle ended in the most unexpected manner. British patrols, finding the enemy strangely quiet, advanced into the village and found it completely abandoned. The Germans still held the trenches to the east of it, but they were apparently not prepared to keep the houses at the price the Sikhs and the West Kents demanded of them. Their three days' tenancy had cost them 5000 men.

During the nights of the 29th and 30th the relief operations were successfully carried out. It is no easy matter to exchange troops in the dark and in close

contact with the enemy. Guides who know the ground have to be provided for every trench; the men must be led up in close touch with each other and in perfect silence, and then the exchange must be made in the trenches in the most orderly manner, and so quietly that the enemy may have no suspicion of what is going on. Sir Horace and his staff had had experience of this when they left the Aisne. To secure the safety of the line they relieved only the alternate battalions at first; and as it took two and a half hours to remove each battalion, two nights were required for the whole operation.

At 10 A.M. on October 31 Sir Horace handed over to Sir James Willcocks and started for his new Headquarters at Hazebrouck. But though he had left the line, his anxieties were not yet over; for the Germans were keeping up a tremendous pressure on the Indian troops, who were at first unused to their methods. Then, on November 1, Sir Horace had to send the Worcesters and Dorsets, and afterwards his remaining seven and a half battalions to the assistance of General Allenby at Messines. But on the 2nd the French reinforcements began to arrive at the rate of eighty trains a day; the 14th Brigade also came up, and the Indians began to hold their own, the Ghurkas getting into the enemy with their kukris. The German attacks died away and their main effort went northwards, where the Kaiser in person was bringing his Guard against Ypres. The southern battle was over, and Givenchy still barred the way to the Channel.

Here we may end the 'Story of a General.' It is true that there is much more worth telling; for Sir Horace returned from his three days' holiday to command not

an army corps, but an army, more than twice as large as any that Wellington ever saw. But we have reached the end of that which will always be reckoned as his historic achievement, and one of the most inspiring episodes in all our wars.

THE WAR IN THE AIR

1. Scouting and Spotting

The art of fighting has been developed in this War in many directions; but most of the new methods are not really new, they are only old ones revived or adapted. Hand grenades, mines, and daggers are all ancient weapons. Poisonous gases are older still. Aerial torpedoes are only a kind of bomb, and submarines only an improved type of a boat invented more than a century ago. But fighting in the air is really a new thing—a dirigible is very different from the old balloons, and an aeroplane, a machine heavier than air and yet capable of flying, is an advance on the dirigible.

The aeroplane is a very recent invention, but this is not the first war in which it has been used. The Italians, in their campaign against the Arabs in Tripoli, found reconnaissance by aeroplanes of great service. Their airmen were daring enough to make voyages out over the desert. They gained some useful information, did some damage, and had some narrow escapes; but, as their enemy was not a civilised power, their air service was quite unopposed, and they were not compelled, as we have been, to make improvements and invent new methods. In the present War the power and stability of our aeroplanes, and the skill and numbers of our pilots, have increased beyond all expectation. We have even

done something towards thinking out the question of the real uses of aeroplanes, and whether they ought to be considered as a separate service, like the Navy and Army, or an arm of those two services, like cruisers in the Navy, or cavalry in the Army.

But before we make up our minds upon a question of this kind, the first thing necessary is to go through the records of the War and see what aeroplanes have actually enabled us to do. I propose to give a short account of some of the most conspicuous services rendered by our airmen, and I shall group them together under headings. First will come reconnaissance—the work of reconnoitring the enemy's fleets, armies and positions; secondly, observation for the artillery, on sea or land; thirdly, raids on the enemy's bases, communications, munition depots or factories; fourthly, maintenance of communication between our own forces; and fifthly, a kind of work which naturally develops out of all these, the work of fighting the enemy's airmen, interfering with their service and preventing them from interfering with our own. Lastly, there will be a good deal to say about Zeppelins, what they have done and how they have been dealt with by the guns, ships, and airmen of the Allies.

Reconnaissance or scouting, as everyone knows, has hitherto been done at sea by cruisers, and on land by cavalry or by infantry patrols. Some years ago an attempt was made to gain a better view of an enemy's position and movements by means of captive balloons and kites, which carried observers up to a greater height than hills or buildings could afford them. But the observation posts thus provided were subject to weather disturbance, and in any case they had to be kept well in the rear of

the fighting line if they were to be safe from the enemy's gun-fire. Aeroplanes are troubled by both of these difficulties, but not nearly to the same extent. Our airmen habitually disregard the fire of the enemy's anti-aircraft guns—Archibald, Cuthbert, and the rest of them—and they have not often been defeated by the weather, though of course in rain or fog it is not possible to do much good. The value of their service was first proved in the battles of Mons and Le Cateau, and during the retreat which followed. It is more than likely that von Kluck might have succeeded in isolating and destroying the left of the British Army if our aeroplanes had not detected at the beginning that three or four army corps instead of one were attacking Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's force. The airman who reported this fact was at first not believed; but other airmen were then sent out with experienced observers, who confirmed the information, and the necessary orders were given to prevent the 2nd Corps from being outflanked. It is said, on the other hand, that von Kluck's own airmen failed him at the critical moment, when he was nearing Paris. His move to the south-east, of which you have read in the 'Story of a General,' and which was immediately detected and reported by our Flying Corps, took him right across the front of the British Army. That Army, as his scouts should have told him, was neither beaten nor contemptible, but was lying behind the Marne in perfect order and ready to attack him in flank. His thrust between the 6th and 5th French armies brought him therefore not into a ready-made gap, but right into the face of a powerful enemy, who immediately drove him fifty miles back in disorder.

During our retreat the airmen had had a particularly

trying time; for every day every machine, whatever its condition, had to be got away to the south to save it from the oncoming Germans. The pilots often took great risks in flying rickety, half-repaired machines, but they were always successful in getting them away. There is a good story of one which was in the very act of being repaired when the German artillery came up and began its daily rear-guard bombardment. As the shells came nearer and nearer, covering the ground in the methodical Hun fashion, the pilot and his mechanic worked harder and harder at their engine, till at last they had done enough to start her on. A shell fell thirty yards to one side of them; they jumped in and began to move forward. As they rose merrily into the air the next shell arrived; it pitched exactly upon their repairing ground, too late by some few seconds.

The Germans, when it came to their turn to retreat, were not always so skilful or so lucky. After driving them over the Marne our troops captured a number of their abandoned aeroplanes—at one place as many as twenty in one park. They were Taubes, not so good or so fast as our machines, and our airmen already had complete mastery over their enemies, sometimes scouting in complete disregard of them and sometimes shooting them down with rifle or revolver. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien had occasion repeatedly during the first month of the war to bring to the notice of the Commander-in Chief 'the magnificent and heroic work' being performed by the squadron of the R.F.C. attached to his staff. He wrote on September 9: 'Our aeroplane officers are real heroes. Not only do they appear to have put the fear of God into the German airmen, for they hunt them wherever they see them, with the result

that there have been none in the air for two days, but in spite of being shot at every time they go up, they continue their reconnaissances and bring back quite invaluable—and what always proves to be true—information.'

The 'Flight' or squadron attached to the 2nd Corps consisted of Major Salmond and Captains Jackson, Charlton, Conran, and Cruikshank. Their value, as the General points out, lay not so much in the success with which they fought and beat the enemy's scouts, as in the quality of the information which they reported. Our airmen have realised this from the beginning, and have allowed nothing—not even their sporting instinct for a fight—to turn them aside from their main duty. To be the eyes of the army—that must come before everything else; and in carrying out this principle there is plenty of room for heroism. A typical example is that of Second-Lieutenant W. B. Rhodes-Moorhouse. This officer was sent out early on April 26, 1915, to bomb the railway line and bridge behind the German lines near Courtrai. This he did with success, but while flying low he was severely wounded by rifle-fire. His attack being accomplished, he might have thought it worth while to save his life by descending and surrendering in time to have his wound dressed. But he had in his flight discovered some important facts, which he knew would be of more value even than the interruption of the enemy's communications. He therefore held on, and though again hit, he succeeded in reaching the British lines, thirty-five miles away, in time to make his report before he collapsed. It was then too late to save his life; the V.C. which was awarded him, 'for most conspicuous bravery,'

was gazetted after his death and presented to his wife.

Second-Lieutenant Rhodes-Moorhouse was not an isolated example. Captain Borton, when shot through the neck and jaw, got his observer Captain Marshall to bandage him in the air, and insisted on completing his reconnaissance before he came down. For this admirable piece of work both officers received the Military Cross. On July 31, 1915, another V.C. was won. Captain J. A. Liddell, while on a flying reconnaissance over Ostend, Bruges, and Ghent, was severely wounded by a shot which broke his right thigh and made him unconscious for the moment. His machine dropped 3,000 feet; but he then, by a great effort, recovered partial control, and flew home under fire, arriving at the end of half an hour with his control wheel and other machinery smashed. His leg was amputated, but he died on August 31.

At sea, opportunities for air reconnaissance did not come so soon—the German fleet was shy and the North Sea misty. But when submarines and Zeppelins began their campaign, they provided plenty of work for scouts and a regular system of air-patrols was established along our east and south-east coasts. It was found that submarines were clearly visible to an observer flying over them, even when they were submerged at a considerable depth, and we shall see presently that they were not only reported to warships, but sometimes successfully attacked, by aeroplanes. And when the long-hoped-for fleet action came off on May 31, 1916, the R.N.A.S. had an honourable share in the victory. Admiral Beatty gives the following account of it in his despatch. 'At 2.45 P.M. I ordered *Engadine*

(Lieut.-Commander C. G. Robinson) to send up a sea-plane and scout to N.N.E. This order was carried out very quickly, and by 3.8 P.M. a sea-plane with Flight-Lieutenant F. J. Rutland, R.N., as pilot, and Assistant-Paymaster G. S. Trewin, R.N., as observer, was well under way; her first reports of the enemy were received in *Engadine* about 3.30 P.M. Owing to clouds it was necessary to fly very low, and in order to identify four enemy light cruisers the sea-plane had to fly at a height of 900 feet within 3,000 yards of them, the light cruisers opening fire on her with every gun that would bear. This in no way interfered with the clarity of their reports, and both Flight-Lieutenant Rutland and Assistant-Paymaster Trewin are to be congratulated on their achievement, which indicates that sea-planes under such circumstances are of distinct value.'

The Germans do not seem to have made such good use of aeroplanes for reconnoitring: but when the War began they were ahead of us in their methods of artillery observation. At Mons and Le Cateau our men had to stand up to the fire of guns which were not only much more numerous than our own, but also better directed. The German airmen flew over our positions dropping bombs which killed no one but gave out a quantity of dense black smoke when they reached the ground. Before this smoke had time to disperse, their guns had been ranged on it and thereby attained a discouraging accuracy. Our own airmen had, of course, been trained to co-operate with the artillery, but their method was the ordinary one of observation and report. This works well enough when the opposing lines are fixed for a length of time, but in an open battle the German plan

'The light cruisers opening fire on her.'

is far quicker and more certain. In the later stage of the war in the west, both sides have used all their ingenuity to conceal the emplacements of their guns, and the work of observation from the air has become much more difficult. At sea, the opportunities for 'spotting' from the air have been much rarer; in the bombardment of the Turkish forts in the Dardanelles aeroplanes did excellent work, but details are difficult to obtain. Good accounts, however, have been published of the destruction of the German cruiser *Königsberg*, a difficult job which without aeroplanes could not have been finished at all. The *Königsberg*, a light cruiser from von Spee's China squadron, was chased into the Rufigi river on the East Coast of Africa in November 1914. The water was too shallow for British cruisers to follow her, so two colliers, the *Newbridge* and the *Duplex*, were gallantly run in under fire and sunk in the fairway. The *Königsberg*, being thus completely bottled, concealed herself by turning into a palm grove—palms were planted on her deck and tied to all her funnels and masts.

In old days the British sailor would have been compelled to cut her out with boats, at a great cost of life. Now he had other resources. The place of our cruisers was taken by the *Trent* and *Mersey* monitors, specially built for river work; and aeroplanes were sent for to direct their fire. On April 25, 1915, Mechanic Ebenezer Boggis went up with Flight-Commander Cull, and photographed the *Königsberg* most daringly from a height of only 700 feet. Of course the machine was heavily fired on and badly damaged: but the German palm grove was successfully located.

On July 6, the attack was made. At 5.25 A.M., Flight-Commander Harold Watkins went up from Mafia

Island, and his observer dropped six bombs at the *Königsberg* to keep her quiet while the monitors were getting into position. At 5.40 A.M. Flight-Commander Cull, with Flight-Sub-Lieutenant Harwood Arnold as observer, went up to spot for the guns. The two aeroplanes relieved each other at the work, but they were thirty miles from their aerodrome, and the climate and the thickly wooded windings of the river made the work very difficult for both gunners and spotters. At 12.35 P.M. one aeroplane broke down, and at 3.50 P.M. the second one also. The monitors then moved in further up the river, and silenced the enemy's guns. An officer in one of the monitors wrote the following account home: 'The *Königsberg* was now firing salvoes of three only. The aeroplane signalled all hits were forward—so we came a little left to get her amidships. The machine suddenly signalled: "Am hit—coming down—send a boat." And there she was, about halfway between us and the *Königsberg*, planing down. As they fell they continued to signal our shots; for we, of course, kept on firing. The aeroplane fell in the water about 150 yards from the *Mersey* and turned a somersault. One man was thrown clear, but the other had a struggle to get free. Finally both got away and were swimming for ten minutes before the *Mersey's* motor-boat reached them—beating ours by a short lead. They were uninjured, and as merry as crickets!'

The *Königsberg* was reported to be not actually destroyed; so a second attack was ordered on July 11, by which time both aeroplanes were again ready for service. This time, says their Admiral in his despatch, the observers, by their excellent spotting, soon got the

guns on the target, and hit after hit was rapidly signalled. At 12.50 P.M. it was reported that the *Königsberg* was on fire. He adds that the Flying Officers one and all have earned his highest commendations, and besides those already named he specially mentions Squadron-Commander Robert Gordon and Flight-Lieutenant Vivian Blackburn, as well as Assistant-Paymaster Harold Badger, who volunteered to observe during the first attack, and Lieutenant Alan Bishop, R.M.L.I., who volunteered to observe during the second attack, though they had neither of them had any previous experience of flying. What a chance to jump at!

2. Communications and Raids

One of the great objects of every commander must be to cut or injure his enemy's communications and so interrupt his supply of food and ammunition. In former wars this has often been done, or threatened, by cavalry raids, or by infantry employed in rapid flank movements: and it may yet happen that before this war is over we may see moves of this kind carried out either by the Russians or by the Allies in the West. But during the 'war of positions' it is only by the use of aeroplanes that it has been possible to raid communications.

At the start the Germans led off; but their raids were attacks not so much on communications or military bases as upon the buildings and civil population of Paris and other towns. Moreover, their attempts were extraordinarily unsuccessful and costly. In October 1914 they made twelve raids in France and lost eight machines without doing any military damage whatever.

ever. The French, on the other hand, successfully raided on October 30 the Headquarters of the Duke of Würtemberg at Thiek near Dixmude. They drove the Duke and his general staff into the woods, burnt the château in which they had been installed, and destroyed their train of automobiles.

Our own airmen of the R.F.C. were at the same time doing useful work, but for the most part not of this particular kind. Their first great raid was on the Zeppelin sheds at Düsseldorf, of which we shall hear later on. But the raid of the seaplanes on Cuxhaven, which took place on Christmas Day 1914, was a true communication raid, for the place attacked was a harbour and supply base for the enemy's fleet. The flotilla which made the attack consisted of nine seaplanes, with their mother-ships *Engadine*, *Riviera*, and *Empress*, supported by a light cruiser, the *Arethusa*, a number of destroyers, and some submarines. When their approach was observed from Heligoland, they were at once attacked by two Zeppelins and several seaplanes and submarines. But the morning was foggy and the Germans too shy to be really dangerous. Their submarines were easily avoided, their seaplanes dropped their bombs into the sea, and the Zeppelins made off into the upper regions when the *Arethusa* and *Undaunted* opened fire on them.

Then came our turn. Seven of our nine seaplanes rose and made for the German coast: their pilots were Flight-Commanders Douglas Oliver, Francis Hewlett, Robert Ross, and Cecil Kilner, Flight-Lieutenants Arnold Miley and Charles Edmonds, and Flight Sub-Lieutenant Vivian Blackburn. All of these dropped bombs on such objects as gasworks, docks, and seaplane sheds,

but the fog was thick and they could not stay long to verify results. It was evident from statements made afterwards in the German press that whatever the damage done may have been, the Kaiser and his people were very seriously impressed.

After some two hours of excitement the raiders began to return one by one. Their mother-ships were waiting for them at the rendezvous, and soon got four of them safely on board. The fifth came down too near to Heligoland, but a thoughtful submarine was waiting about there on the chance and picked him up at once. The sixth then came down in the same neighbourhood with his floats damaged. He also was picked up by the submarine, but at that moment a Zeppelin came down to see what was being done. Lieutenant-Commander Nasmith, with some of his men, happened to be on deck and by waving their caps at the Zeppelin, and cheering, they persuaded her either that they were Huns, or that strong support was at hand. The enemy swam away for a time, like a huge fish shying away from a suspicious bait, and when she decided to come back for another sniff she was too late—the submarine was rapidly submerging, and though several bombs fell near her none of them did any damage.

The seventh airman failed to put in an appearance, and at the end of three hours the flotilla had to return and report him missing. This caused great regret both in the Service and all over England, for he was Flight-Commander Hewlett, one of the boldest and most skilful of all our airmen, and the bearer of a famous name. Nothing could be heard of his fate for several days; then on December 29 came news

that he had been seen to come down on the water near Heligoland, so that he ought to be a prisoner. But we had by that time found out that to fall into the hands of the Huns did not always mean being a prisoner. The anxiety was almost more painful than before: but on the 30th came a wire from Holland, and on New Year's Day there was universal joy over the news that Flight-Commander Hewlett had been picked up by a Dutch boat, and as he was found in non-territorial waters, would be allowed to return to England. His full story has not been published, but it is understood that his bombs drove the battle cruiser *Von der Tann* from her moorings in such a hurry that she impaled herself on the stem of another ship and was put out of action for some months. It is also said that her panic was partly due to the appearance of a golliwog mascot, which the ingenious airman tossed on board her as a parting gift, when he had expended all his bombs. If this story is true, we shall expect to find that the German seaplanes have since then been methodically supplied with golliwogs for use against our fleet.

The R.N.A.S. have followed up their Cuxhaven success with many others, of which the most brilliant have been the bombing of the Turkish munition factory at Constantinople, and the attacks on Smyrna and other Turkish bases. The Constantinople raid involved a flight of over 300 miles.

In the meantime the R.F.C. had been much strengthened and was constantly at work on the enemy's communications in Flanders. On April 26, 1915, they bombed the railway stations of Staden, Thielt, Courtrai, Roubaix, and other places, as well as an armoured

train near Langemarck. On May 3 French and English airmen made a daring raid on Bruges, where they bombed the station and other buildings occupied by the enemy's troops.

On May 27 eighteen French aeroplanes, with heavy bombs, attacked the Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik, which had been converted into the most important explosives factory in Germany. They dropped forty-nine bombs on this, and thirty-six on an annex at Oppan, two miles away, and left both factories shrouded in dense masses of yellow smoke and flame. One pilot was forced to descend, but he succeeded in burning his machine before it could be captured. The German communiqué stated that only twenty workmen were killed and wounded in the factory, and that work was not interrupted.

On June 15 the French followed up this raid by an attack on Karlsruhe. They announced officially that it was made by way of reprisal for the bombardment by the Germans of open towns in France and England, but it would in any case have been a legitimate raid, for the airmen succeeded in causing fires in the barracks, the arms depot, the munitions factory, and the railway station—the southern part of which was completely destroyed. The squadron consisted of twenty-three aeroplanes: they started at 3 A.M., and arrived over the city just before 6 A.M. The airmen dropped 130 bombs and caused a great panic: they were fired at on the outward journey when over Zabern, Strasburg, and Rastatt, and again during the return journey at Blamont, Pfalzburg, and Zabern, but only two of them failed to reach home safely. The Germans announced that eleven civilians were killed

and six wounded, and added inconsequently 'military damage could not therefore have been caused.'

On June 29 a squadron of German aeroplanes approached Hazebrouck, but were driven off without having dropped any of their bombs on the town. On July 3 they claimed to have bombed the Landguard Fort at Harwich and a flotilla of English destroyers; also to have attacked 'the fortified railway works of Nancy and Dornbach, and the barrier fort of Remiremont.' Nothing was heard of these feats from our side, but the wording of the announcement is interesting, as showing a desire to avoid the charge of attacking the civil population.

In August 1915 two remarkable raids were made by the Allies. At 1 P.M. on the 27th a French aviator arrived over Brussels—to the great joy of the Belgians; he circled over the city waving the tricolor and throwing down copies of a proclamation encouraging the people to keep their courage up: he then picked out the barracks and the German gas factory close by, and gave them eight bombs. The barracks were considerably damaged: the gas factory was completely wrecked and most of its staff killed or wounded. The airman was heavily fired on by anti-aircraft guns, but returned uninjured. This was a raid of little material effect but of considerable moral value.

The Houthulst raid, on the other hand, was from both points of view one of the most striking attacks of the war. It was made by a combined squadron of no less than sixty machines—French, English, and Belgian—and was prepared by long and careful reconnaissances. Their object was the destruction of the German base in Houthulst Wood, where for eight months past reserve

batteries and ammunition stores had been accumulated in concealment. 'The trees on our side of the wood had been left standing as a screen, but those behind had been cleared, and barracks and store sheds had been built on a great scale, with electric lighting laid on and carefully shaded. The airmen had first to get across the lines of the German trenches, from which they were heavily fired upon: then to face a great array of Archibalds, provided for the protection of the Houthulst base. They not only made their way through and dropped all their bombs, but many of them actually returned to camp for a fresh supply, and ran the gauntlet a second time. In all 9000 pounds' weight of bombs was dropped: the three ammunition stores were all exploded, many buildings were set on fire, and the aviators, who were flying low to do their business thoroughly, found the heat of the flames intolerable. The Germans were seen in complete panic, running about distractedly like ants, and the state of their nerves may be inferred from the fact that not one airman was touched by their shot.

On September 14, two French aviators made an extraordinarily daring attack on a troop train going from Donaueschingen to Villingen in the Grand Duchy of Baden. They flew one on each side of the train as it ran along, came down to within 12 or 15 feet of the ground and opened fire with their machine-guns through the windows of the carriages. The German troops, being far behind the frontier, had no ammunition with them, and the stoker and many soldiers were killed without resistance. Some jumped from the train; and the aviators continued to fly up and down it till the junction of Marbach was reached, where they completed

the day's work by flying over the station and firing into the ranks of the soldiers drawn up on the platform. The German account stated that 'near Donaueschingen a passenger train was attacked by a machine-gun, some persons being killed.'

The British airmen about this time did a good deal of work of the same kind. Sir John French, in his dispatch of November 1, 1915, speaks of the wing of the R.F.C. attached to the 3rd Army during the fighting in September, as having done good service 'by distant flights behind the enemy's lines, and by successfully blowing up railways, wrecking trains, and damaging stations on his line of communications.' He adds that throughout the summer the volume of work performed had been steadily increasing; for example: 'The R.F.C. has on several occasions carried out a continuous bombing of the enemy's communications, descending to 500 feet and under in order to hit moving trains on the railway. This has in some cases been kept up day after day; and during the operations at the end of September, in the space of five days, nearly six tons of explosives were dropped on moving trains, and are known to have practically wrecked five, some containing troops, and to have damaged the main railway line in many places.

So much for raids on the enemy's communications; it is more difficult to give instances of the use of aeroplanes for keeping open our own. But there is one very remarkable case which may be cited. In the Mesopotamian campaign, when General Townsend's force was besieged in Kut, they discovered great hidden stores of grain, but had no means of grinding so large a quantity as was needed daily. Millstones were

accordingly brought up by aeroplanes and dropped into Kut. Afterwards, when food again began to run short, and the relieving force was fatally held up by floods, the aeroplanes once more attempted to supply the garrison, bringing them flour, atta, salt, and tea. They also dropped a certain amount of tobacco and cigarettes, but as they could not bring enough to go round, General Townsend stopped the supply, for he would not allow any luxuries for himself or his officers which could not be shared by all. Nor, of course, would he dream of leaving his men, though it is quite obvious there is now no difficulty in bringing away a limited number of persons from a besieged place if there are aeroplanes available. The Austrians kept up a regular post to and from Prschemysl during the long siege; and it is believed that when General Townsend wished to consult with the relieving army he more than once flew out of Kut, attended a conference in General Gorringe's camp, and then returned to carry on his splendid defence. But when the time came, he stayed with his garrison, as a captain stays on board his sinking ship.

8. Fighting in the Air

Fighting in the air is of course an interruption to the main business of scouting or spotting, and the Germans in their logical way seem to have given general orders to their airmen to avoid fighting whenever it is possible to do so. By this plan they have certainly lessened their risks, but they have also lessened their results. They have often been unable to come over our lines for days at a time, and their knowledge of our movements must have been seriously limited. In

the advance of the first week in July 1916, a British staff officer wrote that for some days he had not even seen a German aeroplane, however distant. Our airmen, on the other hand, swarmed everywhere, bombing the enemy's communications and bringing back information about his guns and reinforcements. This great advantage was the result of a long struggle for individual supremacy.

At the beginning of the War the airmen of the Allies quickly gained the mastery on the Western Front. The British machines especially were too fast for the enemy, and our airmen shot better with rifle and revolver. But, by the middle of October 1914, the Germans were turning out machines which could climb and fly faster than ours, and both sides began to mount machine-guns in their aeroplanes. The English factories replied with still faster machines, and the Germans then adapted the Morane biplane and called it the Fokker. The peculiarity of this machine is that it has great speed for a short flight; it is therefore useful for stay-at-home tactics only, and is used to lie in wait for our men, almost always behind the German lines, and in such a position as to get the advantage of the wind. All the German orders and precautions, however, have in the long run been of no avail, and by the summer of 1916 our men have beaten the Fokkers as completely as they had previously beaten the Taubes and Albatrosses. During the advance in July, they are reported to have 'pretty well cleared the sky of Fokkers,' and to have received a despairing petition from the German airmen—'Please give your bloody Flying Corps a rest.'

A good example of the early fights was one which

took place in December 1914. An Albatross having a strong north wind behind him ventured to rush our lines. His challenge was accepted by an English pilot, whom I am obliged to call X. Having a good Avro machine, our man climbed more quickly than his enemy expected, and the shots that were meant to get him before he was up all passed below him. The German, seeing that he had missed, then turned to go home, but found the wind heavily against him. It was against X. too, but his Avro gained on the enemy, who dodged like a rook trying to escape from a peregrine. He succeeded in avoiding X.'s fire, but the chase was too much for him; when he found he could not shake off his pursuer, his heart failed and he came down and surrendered.

The German authorities were not slow to perceive that, man for man, the Allies were the better fighters. They said that it would not do to trust their average airman against ours, and they endeavoured to train a class of super-airmen to fly special machines and do the fighting for the whole flying corps. The Allies had their champions too, and there were many thrilling duels in the air. One of the most remarkable was that on May 26, 1915, between an anonymous Frenchman and a German pilot carrying Lieutenant von Buelow, of the Imperial Guard, an observer and gunner. The account given by the Frenchman is believed to be the first actually written and published by any airman of a duel fought by himself. The narrator heard that there was a certain liveliness being displayed by the enemy; so at about 6 A.M. he climbed to between 8,000 and 9,000 feet and flew cautiously in the glare of the sun above a bait that he knew was a tempting one, a small

town with a railway station which had often been aimed at. While taking up his position he perceived a machine passing him from behind and making towards Paris. 'I gave chase,' he says. 'The German was 8,000 feet up; I rose to 9,000, and as I had a faster machine I rapidly overhauled him. We drew to within 30 feet of the Albatross, but we had such a way on that we shot right past, and I got a bullet in the shoulder, which however did not prevent me from continuing the chase. The Albatross then tried to escape by sinking quickly, but I flew over him, and my lieutenant got in a last volley point-blank. The Albatross dipped and plunged headlong to the ground 6,000 feet beneath. We followed it with our eyes and saw it strike the earth, crumple up like a ball, and bound along the hillside like a rabbit. We descended in spirals. The pilot had been thrown out and lay a few yards away. The observer lay crushed under the engine. We found papers in his pocket bearing the name of Lieutenant von Buelow, Imperial Guard, Berlin. The sight sickened me at first; but when I found 10 large bombs and 40 grenades on the Albatross I was glad, for I realised that we had been the means of saving the lives of the innocent victims for whom these bombs and grenades had been intended.'

This is a perfectly just remark. The German raids on both English and French towns have resulted in the death or mutilation of a number of women and children, and a smaller number of non-combatant men. They have seldom killed a soldier, and the military damage they have inflicted has been negligible. Their object—sometimes denied, sometimes loudly proclaimed—has been simply 'Schrecklichkeit' or 'Frightfulness,'

'Plunged headlong to the ground.'

the German word for sheer brutality, used to terrify a country into submission. They do not, however, approve of similar attempts against themselves. They protested vehemently against the second raid by the French on Karlsruhe in June 1916, but it may have done good if it leads to the re-establishment of the rule against bombing open towns and calling them forts because they may have soldiers in or near them. For the disregard of this rule the Huns are solely responsible.

One of the finest fights by British airmen took place on January 22, 1915, when Dunkirk was attacked by a squadron of twelve German aeroplanes. Captain Holt of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry happened to be on patrol duty alone, flying a small Martiridge Scout. He at once drove off the first two Germans, and was then reinforced by two more machines, flown and fought by Captain Mills and Lieutenant Morgan. The three then attacked the remaining ten German machines, each of which carried two men. Nine they drove off; the tenth they shot down, capturing her pilot and observer alive. For this splendid bit of work Captain Holt received the D.S.O.

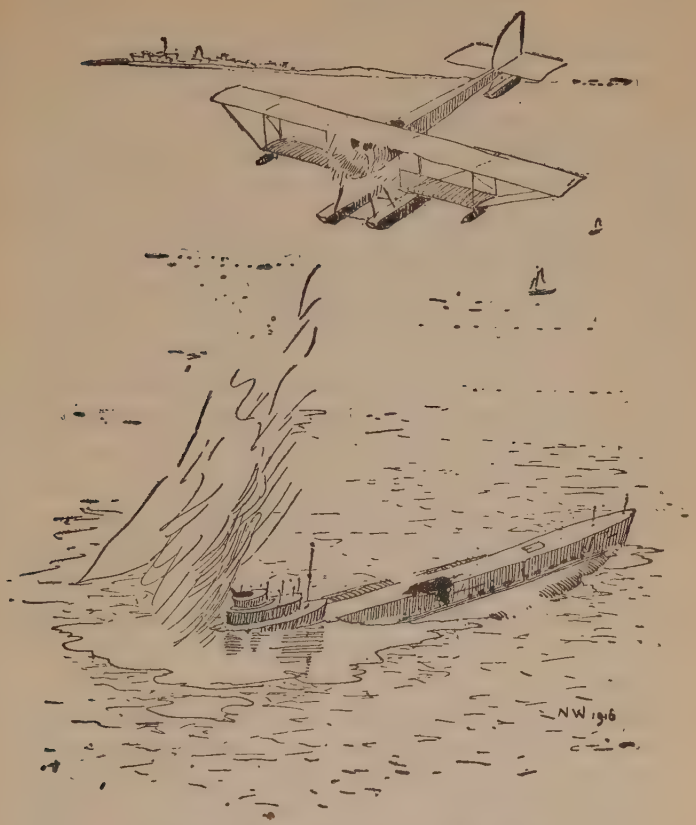
The R.N.A.S. have fought duels too, though, of course, not so many as their brothers of the R.F.C. On December 14, 1915, at about 3.15 in the afternoon, a large German seaplane was sighted off the Belgian coast by Flight Sub-Lieutenant Graham, whose observer was Flight Sub-Lieutenant Ince. They gave chase at once, and a very fine engagement followed, the two seaplaners both manœuvring with great skill and courage. During the latter part of the time Graham closed incessantly upon his opponent and made it a fight to a finish. His

seaplane was riddled by his enemy's machine-gun fire, but he achieved his object and gave his own gunner the chance he desired. The German machine was hit in a vital part and began to fall. Before reaching the water it burst into flames, and at the moment of striking it exploded. No trace of pilot, passenger, or machine could be found. The British seaplane also fell into the sea shortly afterwards, but both officers were picked up and safely landed.

Fights like this, over the sea, have been rare, but the R.N.A.S. have enjoyed the hunting of bigger game. Their exploits against Zeppelins must come in a separate chapter, but it may be recorded here that they have succeeded in destroying submarines as well as in detecting them under water. On the morning of August 26, 1915, Squadron-Commander Bigsworth, a very distinguished officer, spotted a German submarine in shallow water, off the Belgian coast, and attacked her single-handed. Details of the fight have not been published, but the Admiralty reported that the airmen's bombs destroyed the submarine, which was observed to be completely wrecked and sank off Ostend.

Fortunately we have an authentic account of an equally brilliant action fought early in December 1915 by M. de Sinçay and Lieutenant Viney against two German submarines off Nieuport. The story was taken down from the aviators themselves by an interviewer from the *Matin*. 'The incident occurred about midday on Sunday. We had left about half-past eleven on a French biplane with the intention of looking for submarines, which had been reported to be at sea. We rose to a height of about 900 feet, and had been up for about half an hour when, to the west of Nieuport,

about four miles from the coast, we observed two



'The airmen's bombs destroyed the submarine.'

submarines side by side on the surface. The place was very favourable for an attack, as the sea is shallow, and it might be hoped that the submarines would be unable to escape by diving. We came down as rapidly as we

could, in a spiral, determined to bag one of the enemy's vessels. We soon saw that one of them was in a critical situation; for instead of diving it tried to escape by a random flight, changing its direction constantly and making a series of zigzags. It was, in fact, over a sand-bank and consequently could not seek refuge in deep water. We realised, however, that we should be unable to hit it, and decided to encircle the second boat. This one was evidently more difficult to manœuvre, for in spite of all its efforts it could not escape from the ring we made round it as we descended. We came down to 600 feet above the sea; when we were almost sure not to miss, we dropped our first bomb, and had the satisfaction of seeing that we had scored a hit. Even with the naked eye, we could see that serious damage had been done on deck. We made two more rings round the submarine, which could not now escape us, and a second bomb finished the business. The submarine opened and sank. . . . There was no doubt whatever that the boat was sunk all right—the characteristic patch of oil, which is the best proof of the success of these operations, was spreading visibly and was soon covering a considerable area.'

To return to duels in the air. A very good personal narrative is that by the Hon. Eric Lubbock, published in November 1915 in the Eton College Chronicle. 'Yesterday (Captain) Loraine and I had an exciting adventure. We sighted a German about four miles off and attacked. We both opened fire at about fifty yards. I fired again at about twenty-five, firing twenty-six rounds, and then my gun jammed. I heard Loraine give a great shout, but I felt neither fear nor triumph. Then our machine turned downwards. As I fired my

last shot I had seen the Germans turn down. I knew that if he got below us, my machine-gun was the only one that could fire at him. We were diving, I standing almost on the front of the body. Then we turned level. I finished (repairing) my gun, but there was no German. But our guns (Loraine's and mine) had jammed at the same moment. I spent another five minutes at Loraine's gun, finally got both done. We saw another enemy coming in the distance. Loraine went all out to climb and attack, while I put my stiff and aching hands in my mouth, praying for sufficient life to come back to them—they were frozen. Then our engine stopped and we were helpless, so we turned and . . . landed in a plough. Loraine left me and went for help. Of course the crowd came from all sides. One Frenchman, remarking "Vous avez l'air faim," fetched us some beefsteak and coffee, for which I was most grateful. A Tommy gave me a cigarette. Well, the luckless Boche fell twenty yards behind our front trench. The pilot was shot through the stomach; the observer, a boy of seventeen, just grazed in the head. In spite of his fall he will be all right, but yesterday he was crying and absolutely nerve-broken. No wonder, poor thing.'

We can hardly imagine what a fight like this is to the fighters: perhaps they themselves are hardly conscious of the fact that they are in the void, without landmarks or time. Their adventures probably look more wonderful and more picturesque to those who watch them from below. The following is a spectator's account of an air duel.[1] A German aeroplane was seen at a great height,

[1] From an account of an officer of the R.E., published in the *Daily Telegraph*, July 2, 1916.

making for a town behind our lines. 'Then I saw that one of our big fighting 'planes had risen, and, flying low over the trees, was hurrying in my direction, as if trying to get as far away from the German as possible. . . . Then I saw he was getting well behind the enemy and would rise to his height to attack him on his return journey. For some little time I watched the two machines: the one slowly circling over the town in the distance, the other rising rapidly, finally disappearing into a cloud bank. The Boche . . . then turned in a leisurely sort of way and started for home. . . . He came towards me, down wind, at a great pace . . . skirting along the edge of a long dark cloud that stretched away towards the horizon. . . . As I looked the 'plane made a sudden swerve away from the cloud bank, and a larger and darker form seemed to spring out of the shadow, just as you have often seen a hunting spider dart out of its hiding-place and seize some wretched insect. It was the fighting 'plane I had seen rising some time before. Almost before one could realise what was happening the machine-guns were firing, and the German was planing madly downwards for his life. . . . The radius of the spirals got less and less and the descent more steep, till the 'plane was pitching headlong downwards, whirling round and round as it fell, like a dancing Dervish, dropping through space. In amongst the wonderfully varied mixture of the noises of 'the Front' there came a new sound—a crash. . . .' A postscript adds that six civilians had been killed by the bombs of this Hun, so that the spider of the air 'was really a true knight-errant after all.'

That is well said; our airmen are singularly like the knights of the old romances. They go out day by day,

singly or in twos and threes, to hold the field against all comers, and to do battle in defence of those who cannot defend themselves. There is something especially chivalrous about these champions of the air: even the Huns, whose military principles are against chivalry, have shown themselves affected by it. More than once they have come back after a victory and dropped a message to tell of the safety of our captured airmen. Our men have done the same to them, and more also. One of the very latest stories of this kind is perhaps the best of all. On June 18, 1916, Flight-Lieutenant McCubbin was up patrolling, with Corporal W. as his observer. When they reached 8000 feet, they saw Flight-Lieutenant Savage patrolling the west beat, and two Fokkers at 13,000 feet waiting for him behind their lines. They dropped at that moment: Savage dived to 5000 feet with both enemies close upon him, and McCubbin instantly followed to rescue him. He was too late for that: in the first Fokker was the famous Immelmann, the victor of twenty fights, and his swoop was fatal to Savage. But McCubbin, a boy of eighteen who had only been flying four months, was an opponent worthy of the best; he closed Immelmann before he could recover, and when the two machines were almost touching, he killed him with a single shot. The Fokker banked, McCubbin shot its wings away and it fell like a stone.

The Germans have since announced that a British airman afterwards dropped a tin box in their lines, coming down under fire to 100 feet to ensure its safe arrival. It contained a wreath of flowers, covered with a mourning veil, and with a note attached: 'Dropped over Château F. on June 30, for First Lieutenant

Immelmann, who died in battle on June 18. In memory of a brave and chivalrous opponent.'

4. The Zeppelin Campaign

When the war is over and we have time to think about it there will probably be no dispute as to the usefulness of airships. For the service of a fleet their scouting power must be far greater than that of cruisers. The use of Zeppelins at sea has been much lessened by the mistiness so common in the North Sea, but this is a difficulty which affects ships even more, and it is possible to imagine cases in which an airship at 10,000 or 12,000 feet might see from a great distance movements of an enemy who would be quite invisible from the outlook of a cruiser comparatively close at hand. Ships in our western home waters may at times be seen quite clearly from cliffs only 400 feet high, while they themselves are cautiously playing blindman's-buff in the fog banks and alarming each other with horns and sirens.

This, then, may be the future use of airships; but it is not the use which the Germans have made of their Zeppelins hitherto. No doubt they have employed them as scouts when they could; but we have no evidence that they have ever done so with effect, and they have made it clear that the chief service for which they rely on them is something very different. The objects of the great Zeppelin campaign have been destruction and frightfulness. The destruction of an enemy's military resources has always been the principal method of war; the breaking down of his moral force by killing or wounding his non-combatant population

and burning his non-military buildings is a new method of war in modern Europe—a method adopted by the Germans because it gives an additional advantage to the stronger side, which they believed to be their own, and also because, being themselves a very nervous people, they have an exaggerated idea of the power of brutality over the mind. It is in the main frightfulness rather than destruction which they have demanded from their Zeppelins, though they have deluded themselves with both these hopes. After the first raids their Press fiercely repudiated the idea that it was illegitimate or undesirable to kill women and children. 'Not fewer but more women and children must be killed. Only so will the English people learn to take this war seriously.' In reply to this our men enlisted by the hundred thousand. The Germans believed we were all in confusion. 'And now,' said the *Hamburger Nachrichten,* 'the Zeppelin bombs burst in upon this chaos. We believe that we are expressing the wishes of the whole German people when we express our hope that our military authorities will be able to make the Zeppelin terror over London permanent—to perpetuate it until the very end.'

They were judging us by themselves. We read in their own Press that on November 18, 1915, they had a dress rehearsal of an aerial attack on Wilhelmshafen to train the civilians how to act in an emergency. 'When the advertised signal was heard, the public completely lost their heads and rushed into the streets, worrying the police and military with questions and blocking the thoroughfares, thereby impeding military operations.' The Military Governor after this issued a proclamation commanding the citizens to behave

with more courage and dignity. Almost on the same day the *Tägliche Rundschau* published quite solemnly a letter from 'A Distinguished American' in London. This delightful humorist told them (and they believed!) that Londoners were finding life intolerable, that they shut their houses up in darkness from 3 P.M. to 10 A.M., that criminals from Whitechapel poured into Mayfair every evening, and that 'especially among the upper classes the Zeppelin terror has had a simply maddening effect. . . . Yesterday three society ladies surprised me at tea wearing masks to protect them against the poisonous gas of the Zeppelin bombs.'

A month afterwards—December 23, 1915—we read that 'a panic was caused yesterday in Hamburg by a rumour that an Allied air-fleet was arriving to bombard the city.' A letter written the same day by a lady in Berlin describes a tableau at a Christmas Bazaar. 'It represented a Zeppelin raid on London. There was an exact model of a Zeppelin with searchlights shining upon it from Trafalgar Square. Suddenly the roof of one of the houses opens, and an Englishman with, as usual, side whiskers, long teeth, and check suit, rises slowly and elevates a long telescope. Directly he catches sight of the Zeppelin he pops down and disappears from view. This clockwork representation was the chief feature of the bazaar, and must have pleased hundreds of thousands of people.'

It would, no doubt. It sounds like a childish joke to us, but it must have given great pleasure to the Germans, who take war so seriously that they read with approval papers like the *Hamburger Nachrichten*. 'In England,' this paper remarked after the raid of Jan. 31, 1916, 'the people were living happily and free from

care in the midst of war, while labourers were earning good money. Then the Zeppelins came out of the night and taught the haughty people that the war can overtake them everywhere, and that it is bloody, terrible and serious.'

The Zeppelin raids have caused some loss by fires and other damage; worse still, some of our people have been cruelly maimed or killed. It is true that these outrages did bring home to us very forcibly the seriousness of a war against Huns, the enemies of humane and civilised life. But the result was naturally to stiffen our resolve to destroy the power of these ferociously wicked people. Neither our military force nor our *moral* was in the least degree affected; we did not even continue to spend energy on vain protests against the inhumanity of our enemies. The practical business was how to defeat them, without coming down to their level.

Against Zeppelins we have two distinct weapons, the gun and the bomb. The gun may be fired from special fixed positions near the places threatened, or from ships, which are capable of following a Zeppelin as long as it is over the sea. The bomb must be dropped from an aeroplane, and it may be dropped on the Zeppelin in its shed, or during its flight.

Let us see what has actually been done. Our guns were certainly at first unsuccessful. But since that time much more formidable guns have been supplied. In the East Coast raid of July 9, 1915, one Zeppelin was badly damaged by a mobile anti-aircraft gun, and, after struggling over to Belgium, was finally destroyed by airmen from Dunkirk. Another, which came over the same coast on March 31, 1916—L 15

—was hit by gun-fire while over the land. The shell struck her tail, and she came down in the sea. Our ships also have a brace to their credit. On May 4, 1916, a Zeppelin—L 7—on scouting duty was shot down by our cruisers *Galatea* and *Phaeton* in the North Sea, and was finished off by a British submarine which saved seven of the Zeppelin's crew. On the following day—May 5—another Zeppelin—the L Z 85—made an attempt against Salonika. As she passed over the harbour she was heavily fired on by our fleet, and bagged by the *Agamemnon*. She came down in a blaze near the mouth of the Vardar river: the survivors of her crew—four officers and eight men—were rounded up by French cavalry.

Quite early in the war it was realised that the best way to deal with Zeppelins was to kill them in their nests. On September 22, 1914, Flight-Lieutenant Collet flew over the Düsseldorf Zeppelin sheds and dropped three bombs on them from a height of only 400 feet. On October 8 Squadron-Commander Spenser Grey, Lieutenant Marix, and Lieutenant Sippe made another attack on the same sheds. Lieutenant Marix, from 600 feet, landed a bomb through the roof and burnt a brand new Zeppelin, which had only arrived at Düsseldorf the day before. His machine was hit five times, but he and the other two airmen all came home, though without their machines. On November 21 an attempt was made on Friedrichshafen—the town on the Lake of Constanz where the Zeppelins are built and where they do their trials over the lake. Squadron-Commander Briggs, Flight-Commander Babington, and Flight-Lieutenant Sippe were the three pilots: they flew from the French frontier a good 120 miles into German

territory, across mountains and in difficult weather, and were of course heavily fired at and damaged. But they got well down on the Zeppelin factory and were able to report that ' all bombs reached their objective,' and that serious damage was done. Of the three airmen two returned in safety, but Commander Briggs got a shot in the petrol-tank, which brought him down. The German officer commanding at Friedrichshafen was a gentleman : he at once wired to England through Switzerland that Commander Briggs was a prisoner, only slightly wounded and being well treated.

June 7, 1915, was another bad day for Zeppelins. Two raids were made in Belgium. At 2.30 A.M. Flight-Lieutenants Wilson and Mills started for Brussels in the dark. They lost touch at once, naturally, but arrived within a few minutes of each other. Wilson had first innings and got a big bomb on to the shed at Evere, which smashed the Zeppelin but did not set it on fire. Mills, however, backed up by dropping several smaller bombs immediately afterwards on the same spot. The hydrogen gas, which was already leaking, caught fire readily, and the whole place went up in a huge blaze of flame—Zeppelin, sheds, stores, guards, and all. Both airmen returned safely. On the same morning, equally early, two others started for another shed. One had to return, but Flight-Sub-Lieutenant Warneford, a very young and brilliant flyer, had the luck to sight a Zeppelin coming home at 3 A.M. from a raid on England. He instantly climbed, and succeeded in getting above the huge beast without being seen. Then he had the game in his own hands. He dropped six bombs, probably all hits : and the sixth one set fire to the escaping hydrogen. The whole airship flared up : her tank

'Warneford destroying the Zeppelin.'

exploded, and she fell to the ground still burning. Warneford and his Morane monoplane were turned completely upside down by the explosion, and when he had looped the loop the airman found that his engine had stopped. He planed down into a field, started the engine again, and got away. The German troops who rushed to the spot found only the charred bodies of one of their best crews.

While this book is going through the press, two more airships have been burnt and two brought to the ground in England.

The Zeppelins, then, have not had matters their own way at all. Their intention has been 'frightful,' but their performance much less so. By the gun-fire and bombs of the Allies, and above all by accidents of weather and defective machinery, not less than forty of them have been lost in the first two years of the war, and they have only enraged their adversaries without weakening them. It is a pleasure to turn from their futile barbarity to the record of our airmen, the most daring and chivalrous fighters on the roll of a thousand years.

THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

1. Strategy, English and German

The victory of the British Fleet over the Germans off the coast of Jutland was not merely a victory in the ordinary sense of the term. It was certainly a magnificent fight, tremendous, picturesque, and heroic in every detail, and ending in a triumphant pursuit of the enemy; but, for its true importance, we must look further than this. The full greatness of such a victory can only be realised by those who bear in mind certain first principles of war. They can fortunately be stated very shortly and understood very easily.

The object of a commander in war is to destroy, disarm, or neutralise the action of the armed forces of the enemy.

This can seldom be attained by a naval force only, because nations do not live on the sea but on land. Britain is the only Great Power which could be completely brought down by a naval defeat; the rest, not being island powers, could not be isolated and starved out by fleets without armies.

But for the defence of our islands and our trade, and for the assistance of our armies and those of our Allies, a navy is indispensable. For our enemies a navy is indispensable too, if they mean to interfere with our trade or the transport of our armies.

The final object of the fleets then, on both sides, is the same. Whichever side succeeds in achieving it will be able to keep its own trade going, blockade the enemy's warships and merchantmen, and convey its own expeditionary forces oversea at will.

The immediate object of both sides will be to control the enemy's main fleet—not merely their cruisers, flotilla, or transports, but their capital ships, their chief organised force of battleships. Nothing else than this will, in the long run, be of any avail. In war, then, the obvious method will be to go directly for this control and achieve it. That is the game of the stronger side.

The weaker side is almost always compelled to play a different game. Knowing its inferiority it will try to put the balance right by some dodge, some lucky stroke, or by a succession of small scores. It will avoid battle as long as possible, and, if forced to fight, will always try to break off before the decisive point. In the meantime it will attempt to weaken the enemy by torpedoing a cruiser here and a destroyer there, and capturing anything from tramps to trawlers.

The experience of all naval war has taught us very clearly the difficulty of this second method. We know that you cannot destroy an enemy's trade until you have bottled or beaten his main fleet: and that a weaker fleet has never succeeded in beating a stronger one by sniping or piecemeal assassination.

The Germans know this too, but they have not ventured to act on it. They have fallen into the old temptation of the weaker power. Instead of fitting themselves to grapple and sink the British Grand Fleet, they have wasted their time and resources in commerce-

raiding; and since they despaired of obtaining the real control of the North Sea, they have devoted their efforts to all kinds of actions which might deceive neutrals and their own people into the belief that they had done so.

We do not know how far they have been able to keep up this deception at home. Perhaps, in Germany, it is not yet universally known that the seas are absolutely closed to German trade, and that a hundred and fifty of their submarines have been sunk or captured without achieving a diminution of our merchant fleet in any way disabling. But, by April, 1916, it could no longer be concealed that the British Fleet was blockading Germany with very embarrassing results.

The Germans therefore determined to send the High Seas Fleet out, and this was a right decision. But though right as regards method, it was in spirit necessarily half-hearted. It was not a resolve to stake everything on a fight to a finish, but another attempt to play at the game of 'Tom Tiddler's Ground'—to run out and hit the enemy and get away again before being caught.

In the Battle of Jutland, then, the immediate object of the two fleets was not the same. Admiral Jellicoe and his men had only one desire—to come to grips with the enemy, and not to let go till the question of the command of the sea was finally settled. As Nelson once wrote at a similar crisis: 'The event would have been in the hands of Providence; but we may, without vanity, believe that the enemy would have been fit for no active service after such a battle.' He was quite ready to fight against odds and be 'soundly beaten' if only we could so damage the enemy that they could 'do us no

harm this year.' And that must always be the main principle for a British Admiral: our aim must always be a life-or-death fight.

Admirals von Scheer and von Hipper were in a very different position. Their main object was to come home again, of course with as much credit as possible, but above all with as little loss. To catch part of our fleet with the whole of theirs, and destroy or badly damage it—that was good enough strategy in its way. But as in their previous raids, so in this, they made their plans with a view not to remaining in possession of the field of battle, but to running away at the moment of greatest advantage.

If we bear in mind these two aims, the English and the German, we shall find the story of the battle much more interesting, and we shall understand its importance. For the importance of a victory lies, not in the glory or excitement of it, nor in the balance of losses inflicted, but solely in the result of it upon the course of the War.

2. Beatty and the Battle-Cruisers

During the forenoon of Wednesday, May 31, 1916, an aerial observer flying low and fast over the North Sea, might have seen a sight to take his breath. A German squadron of five battle-cruisers, attended by a swarm of light cruisers and destroyers, was steaming north-west from Wilhelmshaven to a point near the entrance of the Skagerack and opposite to the Jutland Bank, on the coast of Denmark. Nearing that same point from another direction was a similar squadron of six British battle-cruisers, also with light cruisers and destroyers spread out before them.

The British Squadron was out upon its ordinary duty of periodically sweeping the North Sea, to enforce our effective command of it. The German Squadron was out upon a special 'enterprise'—it was venturing upon our ground either for a coast raid, or in order to convoy commerce-raiders through to the Atlantic, or—more probably still—to try and snatch a success by surprising our cruisers. It was not their intention to attack six of our battle-cruisers with five of their own. The German Admiral planned to beat six—or even ten—ships with twenty-eight, and to get home again without a general action. The British Commander-in-Chief planned to hold with ten ships any number that might encounter them until he could swing in his full force and make it a fight to a finish.

The action which resulted cannot yet be fully described; but it is possible to get a fairly good idea of it by following the time-table and plan given in Sir John Jellicoe's despatch, and amplifying with details from personal narratives. Of these narratives I have over thirty before me, some in manuscript and some in print.[1] They are from officers and men of all ranks, and some of the best are by midshipmen; but, in order to avoid certain objections, the writers' names and rank will be concealed, when passages are quoted, under single letters corresponding to their order in my list.

Contact between the opposing fleets was, of course, first made by the light cruisers. 'At 2.10,' says A, 'while we were scouting, the *Galatea* hoisted the signals "Prepare for immediate action," "Enemy in sight."

[1] The printed ones have appeared in *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, and *Weekly Despatch*, to the editors of which I make my grateful acknowledgments.

At that time we were proceeding at 22 knots, but we accelerated the speed to 32 knots. Of course, at the very first signal, every man went to his proper station. We sighted two enemy destroyers attacking or boarding the steamer *Fjord*; but, needless to say, they did not trouble much about her when we made our appearance. We opened fire at 2.23 P.M. and they replied, but were considerably out of range. We were just beginning to enjoy ourselves when the appearance of three heavy enemy cruisers considerably increased our danger. We sent in salvo after salvo, but nothing struck us, and when we had learned all we could we turned to port and started to meet our main Battle Fleet. By this time we were in the midst of shells, and although we were hotly engaged we decreased our speed to 25 knots to allow the enemy to close a little. But heavier shells caused us again to increase our speed. We were never out of sight of the German Fleet. The two other ships of our squadron came tearing up repeated our signals—" Enemy in Sight "—and opened fire at them.'

The 'three heavy cruisers' were the leading ships of von Hipper's battle-cruiser squadron, which consisted of the *Hindenburg*, *Lützow*, *Derfflinger*, *Moltke*, *Seydlitz* and *Von der Tann*. When the *Galatea's* signal was taken in by our battle-cruisers, many junior officers were surprised. 'I thought we were out on a stunt,' says B, 'but I did not think it was going to be the pukka stunt. I was in my bunk, having a nap after lunch, when my servant came and woke me up and told me that we had to take battle stations. . . . I tumbled out pretty quick and got to my place.' That was at 2.20, and Admiral Beatty at once altered course to S.S.E.

so as to get between the enemy and his base. At 3.30 he formed his line of battle—*Lion* (flag), *Queen Mary, Tiger, Princess Royal, Indefatigable, New Zealand.* The light cruisers came in and took stations ahead of the line, with the destroyers. Speed was increased to 25 knots, and the course changed to E.S.E. in order to converge on the enemy, who were 23,000 yards away. At 18,500 yards the *Lion* fired the first shot. The time was then 3.48 P.M. and the 5th Battle Squadron was 10,000 yards behind to the N.N.W.

B continues as follows: 'Those first few minutes were pretty bad, for the Huns got in on us first, and their shooting was just wonderful. Every shell seemed to get home. But when we started we gave them something to go on with. . . . My goodness, what a sight it was! I have seen some ships in my time, and a good number at a time, but I would hardly have believed there were so many ships in the world as I saw on that Wednesday. The water seemed alive with them, and the further you looked the more ships there seemed to be. Of course, of the general action, I have only a very vague and confused idea. We seemed to engage two or three ships, and then they seemed to disappear or limp away. We got hit fairly often, but never in a vital spot, and the longer the game went on the wilder the Huns' shooting became. Our fellows were as steady as rocks, and our shooting was as good as at battle practice, and that's pretty good. But with the awful noise one could hardly realise what was really going on.'

The despatches tell us nothing about the fighting from 4.15 to 4.43 except that it was 'of a very fierce and resolute character.' But we know that during

this time the *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary* were lost. D says, 'The first four minutes of the battle saw most of the damage done to our big ships. I saw the *Queen Mary* and the *Indefatigable* go down. The *Indefatigable* received a most tremendous pounding. You could see the big ship literally staggering under the enormous weight of metal she received. I think that she must have gone down in about two minutes after she received the first broadside. . . . Of course what we wanted to do was to hold on to them at any cost until Admiral Jellicoe with the big lot could come up. Then we knew that we should blow them out of the water; so naturally Beatty was prepared, and so were all of us, to lose some cruisers. The only point was to hold on at any cost.'

During this part of the action twelve of our destroyers made a fine attack. Before getting within torpedo range of the enemy's battle-cruisers they encountered a light cruiser and fifteen destroyers, of which they sank two and drove in the rest. At this moment, 4.38 P.M., the approach of the German Battle Fleet was reported by the light cruiser *Southampton*, and four minutes later they were sighted by Admiral Beatty. He grasped the situation instantly: since the enemy were out in overwhelming force, there was no longer any need for him to be between the German battle-cruisers and their base. They would not wish to retire but to press him, and his business was now to draw them on in the direction of our own Battle Fleet, which was approaching, as he knew, from the N.W. He therefore immediately signalled to alter course 16 points in succession to starboard—that is, to turn completely on his own track and steer about N.N.W. *Southampton*

Destroyers going into action.

and the 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron held on southwards to observe. Von Hipper was probably at this point well pleased with himself. He had lost a battle-cruiser and some other ships; but he had sunk two of ours, and his big brothers had come up just in the nick of time. Ten minutes after Beatty turned he made the same manœuvre, and by so doing took station at the head of the German line of battleships. He must have thought that his trap had proved entirely successful.

3. Beatty and the High Sea Fleet

But von Hipper's own position was completely changed at this moment by the closing in of Admiral Evan-Thomas with his squadron of fast battleships—*Barham*, *Valiant*, *Warspite*, and another. They came into action on their southerly or south-easterly course; but turned 16 points shortly after Admiral Beatty, and took station astern of him. In this position they came, of course, under fire of the German main fleet, but their superior speed enabled them to keep abreast of the head of the enemy's line and out of shot of his rear. E gives this account of the immediate effect of their coming into line: 'A remarkable change took place with the arrival of the *Valiant*, which, with the *Barham*, was the first battleship to arrive. Together with the *Warspite*, which had been engaged with two battle-cruisers somewhere astern, one of which she sank, earlier in the afternoon, they concentrated their fire on the end vessel of the German line. It may seem incredible, but in two minutes the vessel had almost disappeared, only dense clouds of smoke and steam marking the spot where she had been. There was some satisfaction there, for it was that vessel—a three-

funnelled battle-cruiser—which had put a lucky shot right through the *Barham* two minutes after she had opened fire. But the *Barham* had her own back. Yet that was not the only ship we sank. A sight that I shall never forget as long as I live was that of a great vessel that was lying helpless on the sea with her engines out of action. She continued to fire with deadly effect, evidently by control, so methodical were the salvoes, till the *Barham* and *Valiant* opened fire on her at 14,000 yards. She literally crumpled up. Her after gun-turrets disappeared within sixty seconds; her masts and funnels were the next to go; and then, slowly and horribly methodically, the great ton shells of the British vessels began to hit her in the same place at the same time with wonderful precision. They literally dug a hole in the German ship, till, with a tremendous explosion, she blew up. . . . We had not escaped lightly, our superstructure being riddled and our decks ploughed up. Considering the number of shells which hit us, however, the loss of life was very small.' E was in the *Tiger*; but we have an equally good account from F in the 5th Battle Squadron itself. 'Suddenly we got the report, "Enemy in sight," and I think everyone's heart gave a jump. At last, after all these weary months of waiting and preparation, were we going to get a look in at the be-all and end-all of our existence—action with the German Fleet? . . . The guns were loaded, and then round trained the turret on to our first target, a small light-cruiser nearer to us than is healthy for such craft. 'Fire!—an eternity—and then bang! and away goes our first salvo. The shots fell near the enemy but she scuttled away. We let her have another, then ceased fire and

turned our attention to bigger game that was now within range—the German battle-cruisers. . . . The firing now became very general indeed, and the continued roar and shriek of our own guns, coupled with one's work, left little opportunity to think about outside matters. The only predominant thing I, in common with others, remember, was the rapid bang-bang-bang of our smaller secondary armament, as we thought; but, during a lull, we discovered that this was the German shell bursting on the water all round the ship with so loud an explosion that it could be heard right deep down in the heart of the ship. We were at this time receiving a very heavy fire indeed, our own battle-cruisers having become disengaged for twenty minutes to half an hour, so that the fire of the whole German Fleet was concentrated on us. However we stuck it, and gave back a good deal, I fancy. Especially unpleasant, though, was a period of half an hour during whieh we were unable to see the enemy, while they could see us most clearly. Thus we were unable to fire a shot and had to rest content with steaming through a tornado of shell fire without loosing off a gun, which was somewhat trying. However, about 6.30, the sun silhouetted up the Germans and completely turned the tables as far as light was concerned, and for a period of some twenty minutes we gave them a most terrific dressing down, which we trust they will remember. Then down came the mist again, and we had to close them right down to four miles in the attempt to see the enemy. . . . It was at this stage that, owing to some temporary defect, the *Warspite's* helm jammed and she went straight at the enemy into a hell of fire. She looked a most wonderful sight, every

gun firing for all it was worth in reply. Luckily she got under control quickly and returned to the line, and it was this incident that gave rise to the German legend that she had been sunk.' Her helm being jammed she was of course describing a circle, and the German shells were raising a screen of waterspouts round her, under cover of which she disappeared and returned to her own line. Also, as G says, 'the mist made the whole thing so chancy. One minute the German line would be as clear as the silhouettes on a turret, and the next you could see nothing but the leading ship: and so, for hours, we dodged one another like that.'

During this stage, from 4.57 to 5.56 P.M., the enemy was gradually heading to the eastward, the head of his line bending under the severe punishment it was receiving; and Admiral Beatty, keeping the range at 14,000 yards, was beginning to race to get round him on the north. One German battle-cruiser left the line, and other ships showed signs of increasing injury. The destroyers *Onslow* and *Moresby* also harried them with a torpedo attack. *Moresby* was observed to hit a big ship, which afterwards disappeared in a cloud of smoke and steam. Shortly before 6.0 Admiral Beatty reached his furthest point north. At 5.50 British cruisers were reported on his port bow, and at 5.56 he sighted the leading battleships of the Battle Fleet at a distance of five miles to the north. Instantly he altered course to due east, and ran at utmost speed and at a range of only 12,000 yards right round the bend of the enemy's line, reporting to Sir John Jellicoe as he did so, that the enemy were to the S.E. Their line was now led by three battle-cruisers only; these were closely

followed by battleships of the Koenig class and were evidently in difficulties, heading straight towards that which they had hoped never to meet, the 1st, 2nd and 4th British Battle Squadrons. They had digged a pit, and fallen into the midst of it themselves. The rest of their time must be spent in a desperate attempt to get out again.

4. Jellicoe, Hood and Arbuthnot

For our men, whether in battle-cruisers or battleships, the moment of Sir John Jellicoe's arrival was one of intense excitement. The two squadrons who were already engaged knew that they had accomplished their object; the others saw their work before them. H, who was in one of the leading battleships and claims to have been the first to sight the battle-cruisers, has written a very lively narrative. 'I was up in the foretop, and saw the whole show. . . . I was seventeen hours up there, simply bristling with glasses, revolvers, respirators, ear-protectors, and what-nots. I cannot imagine anything more intensely dramatic than our final junction with the battle-cruisers. They appeared on the starboard bow, going a tremendous speed and firing like blazes at an enemy we could not see. Even before we opened fire, the colossal noise was nearly deafening. . . . We commenced by strafing one of the "Kaisers," that was only just visible on the horizon, going hell for leather. The whole High Sea Fleet were firing like blazes.'

'It is the most extraordinary sensation I know to be sitting up there in the foretop gazing at a comparatively unruffled bit of sea, when suddenly about five immense columns of water about 100 feet high shoot up as if

from nowhere, and bits of shell go rattling down into the water, or else with a noise like an express train the projectiles go screeching overhead and fall about a mile the other side of you. You watch the enemy firing six great flashes about as many miles away, and then, for fifteen seconds or so, you reflect that there is about two tons of sudden death hurtling towards you. Then, with a sigh of relief, the splashes rise up, all six of them, away on the starboard bow.

'On the other hand, there is a most savage exultation in firing at another ship. You hear the order "Fire!" The foretop gets up and hits you in the face, an enormous yellow cloud of cordite smoke—the charge weighs 2000 lb.—rises up and blows away just as the gentleman with the stop-watch says "Time!" and then you see the splashes go up, perhaps between you and the enemy, perhaps behind the enemy; or, if you are lucky, a great flash breaks out on the enemy and when the smoke has rolled away you have just time to see that she is well and truly blazing before the next salvo goes off. I had the extreme satisfaction of seeing the *Lützow* get a salvo which must have caused her furiously to sink.' (The *Lützow*, as we know, sank while being towed homewards.)

We may perhaps conjecture that H was in the *Marlborough*; for it was that ship which is stated in the despatch to have sighted the battle-cruisers at 6.0. Sir John Jellicoe had heard their guns at 5.45 and had seen flashes in the mist at 5.55. For him the moment was more than exciting; it was the chance of his life, and everything depended on his coolness and decision. It is no simple matter to bring three squadrons into an action already in progress, in misty weather,

and in face of an enemy already in line of battle. Very great care was necessary even to ensure that our own ships were not mistaken for enemy vessels.

Sir David Beatty probably realised this; in any case, he was going eastward at his utmost speed in order to clear the Commander-in-Chief's front. He was thus deprived of the most powerful part of his force, for Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas, commanding the 5th Battle Squadron, when he observed the Commander-in-Chief's movement to deploy, decided not to follow the battle-cruisers, but to take station as rear squadron of the Battle Fleet. But Sir David was not to be without support; the 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron, under Admiral Hood, was now approaching from the N.E. and had already received orders to reinforce him. Admiral Beatty reports that he signalled to these three ships—*Invincible*, *Inflexible*, and *Indomitable*—to take stations ahead of him, and that they carried out the manœuvre magnificently.

It was at this moment that Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot's squadron of armoured cruisers—*Defence*, *Warrior*, *Black Prince* and another, which had come from the north with Sir John Jellicoe, were seen passing down between the British and German Battle Fleets. They had been engaging the enemy's light cruisers, and Sir John believes that Admiral Arbuthnot, 'in his desire to complete their destruction, was not aware of the approach of the enemy's heavy ships, owing to the mist.' In the story of the battle, full as it is of heroic episodes, there is nothing more extraordinary than the fate of this gallant squadron. There are at least two mysterious points about it, and these will probably never be cleared up; but an admirable

description has been written by J, an officer in the *Warrior*.

'At 5.55 P.M. the following order came down from the fire control to the forward turret: "Enemy cruiser, three funnels, bearing green 90. Range 15,850 yards: deflection 10 left: salvoes control." Twenty seconds later the gong rang, and a fraction of a second had not elapsed before a double gong sounded for range finding. The first two shells having given us the range, the starboard gun of the fore turret thundered out, the shell crumpling up the hindermost of the three funnels of the enemy. A direct hit was then made, when suddenly two more light cruisers were signalled to port, and the *Defence* and the other ship were left to deal with them. . . . All at once a huge fountain of water rose 20 yards ahead of us, and we then knew that we had to deal with something bigger than a light cruiser. Two shells of at least 12-in. calibre fell ahead of the *Defence*, and three seconds later a salvo cut her amidships, and she crumpled up and sank.'

K is another witness, from the *Phaeton*, and he adds: 'We saw the gallant old *Defence* go under, and I shall never forget the heroism of her crew. A German salvo crippled her aft, and being so heavily hit she ought to have hauled out of the firing line, but with splendid courage she went on firing her for'ard guns until another salvo hit her, about a hundred yards away from us. The explosion was deafening, and when it had ceased the brave old *Defence* had completely disappeared.' With her went Sir Robert Arbuthnot, a man of great spirit and unbounded energy, eager and fearless in the highest degree.

J next relates that the *Black Prince* was hit by two

great shells which carried away her funnels and fore-turret. A second salvo, he says, hit and destroyed her. Sir John Jellicoe, on the other hand, reports that 'it is not known when *Black Prince* was sunk, but a wireless signal was received from her between 8 and 9 P.M.'—i.e. more than two hours later. This is a discrepancy which must for the present—perhaps for ever—be left unaccounted for. J continues his account with the story of the *Warrior's* fate: 'Our turn had come, for far away on the horizon we could see three tripod masts. By now the enemy cruisers were burning fiercely and had ceased to fire, but one after another 12-inch shells dropped on either beam of us. At last the enemy, out of our range by 3 miles, found their mark. The first shell smashed our motor-boat hoist into splinters. The second shell hit the starboard side in line with the turrets. The third hit the quarter-deck just abaft the bulkhead door, ploughing downwards and wrecking the dynamos and putting the whole ship in darkness. The gun turrets, too, were almost useless, as the ammunition hoist had gone. Another shot put the port and starboard engine-rooms out of action, killing twenty men. After five minutes, the vessel was on fire, and a number of men were out of action from the effects of asphyxiating gas shells, which the enemy were now using.'

Then came the rescue, one of the most dramatic incidents of the battle. 'At 6.30 we were a hopelessly battered hulk, and waiting for the shells that would finish us, when the *Warspite* passed between us and engaged the foremost enemy battle-cruiser with deadly effect. The first shot from the *Warspite* lopped off the foremast of the leading enemy battle-cruiser; the next

overturned both fore gun-turrets, and in five minutes the enemy vessel was absolutely ablaze from end to end, enveloped in a cloud of dense smoke. The second battle-cruiser, which had been concentrating her fire on the *Warspite*, turned to starboard, smoke belching from her funnels, and she endeavoured to pick up her main squadron. But it was not to be; two shells from the *Warspite* blew every funnel she had got to pieces. A third shot made a great rent in her stern. A fourth ploughed up her deck and burst against the foremast, bringing it down. Two minutes later this vessel also was on fire, heeling over, with the *Warspite* still pounding her and ripping great gashes in her starboard side and bottom. The last we saw of her was nothing more than a broken hulk.'[1] Now the *Warrior* could go home happy. 'Slowly the *Engadine*, which was a hydroplane parent-ship, towed us towards port, passing a ship which had all the survivors of the *Queen Mary*, *Invincible*, *Ardent* and *Fortune* on board. For ten hours we were towed, and it was not until 5 o'clock next morning, when our quarter-decks were awash, that we had to abandon the old *Warrior*.'

It was (we have already noted) while the Battle Fleet was deploying and Sir Robert Arbuthnot was fighting his last fight that Rear-Admiral Hood, as Sir David Beatty's glowing description tells us, was 'bringing his squadron into action ahead in a most inspiring manner, worthy of his great naval ancestors.' Even in peace time it is a most thrilling sight to see great cruisers come swinging in to take their place in a line

[1] She would seem to have been the *Seydlitz*, which went ashore, and was eventually towed into Wilhelmshaven with her stern shot away and other serious injuries.

already formed. Their tremendous rush, their rapid changes of relative position, and the incredible precision of their movements, combine to awe the spectator—he feels as though he were close among the planets,

'Slowly the *Engadine* towed us towards port.'

masses of enormous bulk moving at irresistible speed, but in obedience to unerring law. Those who saw Hood were moved with the same admiration as that which Nelson felt for his friend when he exclaimed: 'See how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action.' Even the *Royal Sovereign* at Trafalgar

had no such hurricane of death to face as the three Invincibles. Their dash into the mist took them within 8,000 yards of the enemy's leading ship, believed to be the gigantic *Hindenburg*. At 6.25, Sir David Beatty reports, 'They were pouring a hot fire into her and caused her to turn to the westward of south.' But before she limped away she had finished her duel with the *Invincible*. There are but few and confused accounts of Hood's end. 'Then the *Invincible*,' says G: 'She was further off. A great belch of smoke and then it was all over. I heard very little. But then you must remember we were loosing off at the Huns all the time, and they were loosing off at us; and the din was pretty fair. I guess that there was a salvo of eight heavy guns every five seconds—probably more. It was the most hellish din you can possibly imagine.'

Sir David Beatty at this moment dashed in with his own battle-cruisers to the support of the *Inflexible* and *Indomitable*, changing course to E.S.E. The mist then closed down and for twenty minutes he was out of action. But the *Hindenburg* did not escape. She was claimed later by our destroyers, as she was hobbling home, and though she was not included in Sir John Jellicoe's list, it is now understood that there is no doubt about her being at the bottom of the North Sea, with her 15-inch guns and all her crew.

5. The Grand Fleet in Action

We have seen how Sir John Jellicoe with the main Battle Fleet arrived exactly at the crisis of the action, and how a number of movements of the greatest importance were all taking place within a few minutes. It

was at 6.14 that the Grand Fleet deployed; at 6.16 the *Defence* was sunk; at 6.17 the 1st Battle Squadron opened fire; at 6.21 Hood's squadron came into action ahead of the *Lion*; at 6.25 the *Invincible* sank; at 6.30 the 2nd and 4th Battle Squadrons opened fire.

The scene was too vast to be within the range of any one man's vision, and too crowded to be taken in in detail. But one impression remains with all—no one who saw it can ever forget the advance of the British Line of Battle. 'The grandest sight I have ever seen,' says L, 'was the sight of our Battle Line—miles of it, fading into mist—taking up their positions like clockwork and then belching forth great sheets of fire and clouds of smoke. The din was stupendous. Unhappily, just when a few hours of good light would have given us the fruits of victory, the light got worse and worse. . . . But there is no doubt we gave the enemy a terrific hammering, and when they saw what was in store they lost no time in clearing off.' M says the same thing even more vivaciously: 'The grandest sight of all was seeing our Grand Fleet turning into a great line and opening fire. Nothing could have been more magnificent and awe-inspiring; at any rate the enemy must have thought the latter, as they cleared out and ran like the devil about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes later. We chased them, but light was failing, and it was misty, and then came the night.'

By comparing Sir John Jellicoe's account of the Battle Fleet action with the plan appended to it on publication, it is possible to make out some details of the deployment. Neither the 4th Battle Squadron, which included the *Iron Duke*, Sir John's flagship, nor the 2nd Battle Squadron, under Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas

Jerram, came into action until thirteen minutes after the 1st Battle Squadron under Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil

'The grandest sight I have ever seen.'

Burney, if indeed they can be said to have come into close action at all. The *Iron Duke* is shown as closely following the battle-cruisers at the head of the line, and is reported by Sir John to have engaged German battle-

cruisers as well as battleships. From these facts, and from the position of the German Fleet, which is shown as just reaching its farthest northerly point and rapidly bending eastwards and southwards, it is clear that the British Fleet was deployed in an easterly direction with the result that when fire was opened at 6.17 it was our rearmost squadron—Sir Cecil Burney's—which was crossing the German front, while the other two battle squadrons were already further east and were turning south in succession to follow Beatty. The Germans, of course, could not face this tremendous array—they could not keep on their northerly course, nor even on an easterly one. They continued to bend to starboard until their track made a complete loop and then straightened out towards the S.W. Beatty, with his battle-cruisers, was on their port side during this loop turn, and Jellicoe came in behind Beatty, his two battle squadrons opening fire at 6.30.

This was great luck for Burney. The enemy's battle-cruisers and light cruisers forming the head of the rather dishevelled line, had turned away from him, but he came into action with their battleships, at a range of 11,000 yards, and 'administered severe punishment.' Sir John's despatch notes that the fire of the flagship *Marlborough* (Captain George P. Ross) was particularly rapid and effective. She began 'by firing seven salvoes at a ship of the Kaiser class, then engaged a cruiser and again a battleship; and at 6.54 she was hit by a torpedo and took up a considerable list to starboard, but reopened at 7.3 at a cruiser and at 7.12 fired 14 rapid salvoes at a ship of the Koenig class, hitting her frequently till she turned out of the line.' The account given by N, a member of the *Marlborough's*

crew, agrees with the despatch as to these details, though it takes, as is generally the case with high-spirited combatants, a sanguine view of the enemy's losses. 'We first sighted seven cruisers disappearing, and some of them in a damaged condition. We opened fire at a battleship of the Kaiser class, and flames immediately broke out on the vessel, and a cloud of smoke arose. A cruiser in flames then hid our quarry from view. The German vessels were making off as fast as they could into the mist and taking advantage of the clouds of smoke scattered over the sea. . . . We singled out another battleship of the Kaiser class, and fired salvoes into her. She turned and disappeared, with smoke and fire proceeding from her. While we were following up we were struck by a torpedo. We were not disabled, however, and obtained revenge by ripping open the side of a cruiser with a few broadsides. Another battleship of the Kaiser class was our next mark, but she refused to fight and hurried away with smoke coming from her. The torpedo-boats then got to work and we put two of them out of action. We were in action three hours, and while shells were flying all about us we were only hit by one, which knocked a little paint off our ship. The aiming of the Germans at our ships was decidedly bad. The torpedo killed two men, and they were the only casualties we suffered. The crew, who behaved splendidly, enjoyed the fight. Some of the gun crews were stripped to the waist, while in our stokehold the men worked up to the middle in water.'

Except the *Marlborough*, which made such a good recovery from the torpedo, the *Colossus* was the only ship damaged in this squadron, which never really

got the chance it ardently desired. O says that when the mist lifted the *Colossus* engaged a large battle-cruiser. 'The first salvo fell short. She then got in a hit on us with a 12-in. shell. After that we got in two more salvoes, each one hitting and setting her on fire fore and aft. She began to settle down by the stern and disappeared in a sinking condition.'

The 4th Battle Squadron—in which were Sir John Jellicoe's Flagship the *Iron Duke* and Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee's Flagship the *Benbow*—engaged the squadron of Koenigs and Kaisers, as well as any disabled cruisers, light cruisers and battle-cruisers which remained within their range. The *Iron Duke* with her second salvo began hitting a Koenig at 12,000 yards and only ceased when the target ships moved away. The 2nd Battle Squadron also fired between 6.30 and 7.20 P.M. at Koenigs and Kaisers, and also at a disabled battle-cruiser. They made good shooting, considering the conditions, the most regrettable of which was the persistent refusal of the Germans to make a fight of it. Again and again the enemy's course was altered, until the High Sea Fleet was making a clean bolt of it to the south-west, their destroyers throwing out a screen of smoke behind them.

It goes without saying that our cruisers and battle-cruisers were hanging on to them like hounds, doing everything possible to hold them. Sir David now had the 3rd Battle-cruiser Squadron formed astern of him instead of ahead. Sir John Jellicoe kept him informed of the course of the Fleet: at 7.6 it was south; between 7.0 and 7.12 Sir David Beatty was turning round gradually to S.W. by S. in order to regain touch with the enemy, and at 7.14 he sighted them afresh at a

range of about 15,000 yards. The ships sighted were two battle-cruisers and two battleships of the Koenig class. The sun went down, visibility improved, and Beatty re-engaged at 7.17, increasing his speed to 22 knots. At 7.32 his course was S.W. and speed 18 knots; he had caught up his quarry, for the leading enemy battleship was now N.W. by W. of him. After a very short time the enemy once more showed signs of punishment, one ship being on fire and another dropping astern. The enemy destroyers then again came to the rescue, covering their capital ships as if with a pall of smoke, and at 7.45 they succeeded in disappearing.

The work of the light cruisers, too, was wonderful. The Fourth Light Cruiser Squadron attacked the enemy destroyers at 7.20 and 8.18, sinking four of them, and then they attacked the battleships, getting home on a Kaiser at 8.40. The First and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons at 7.58 swept to the westward in advance of Sir David Beatty; on their report, he altered course to west at 8.20 and found two enemy battle-cruisers and battleships, whom he engaged at 10,000 yards. The leading ship was repeatedly hit by *Lion*, and turned away 8 points, emitting very high flames and with a heavy list to port. *Princess Royal* set fire to a three-funnelled battleship. *New Zealand* and *Indomitable* sent the third ship out of the line, heeling over and on fire. The mist then came down and at 8.38 the enemy vanished once more, steaming hard to the west.

It is not to be wondered at that they ran. Not only were they inferior in numbers and gun-power, and very severely damaged, but their gunnery had gone completely to pieces. They had, after their first successes, done badly against Beatty and Evan-Thomas,

but against Jellicoe, Jerram and Burney, when they had a fresh opportunity, their nerve failed. In the three squadrons of the Grand Fleet only one ship was once damaged by gunfire, and one by torpedo: the total casualties amounted to three men. We must

'Cheered us like blazes.'

remember that the Germans were out, not for a decision, but for a runaway fight.

Our men were in a very different mood. All the evidence shows that they were intent only upon winning. They took their casualties without flinching and steadily improved their shooting; they were unshaken when they saw great ships in their own line destroyed; they cared nothing for themselves, if only the right side won. 'There was one sight,' says B, 'which I shall never forget. It was the pluckiest thing I have ever seen. When the *Invincible* went down four of the chaps managed to collar hold of a raft. As we steamed

into action we saw these men on the raft, and at first thought they must be Huns. But as we passed by —for of course we could not stop for anything—the four got up on their feet and cheered us like blazes. It was the finest thing I have ever seen.'

6. The Battle in the Dark

Night was now falling; but all was not yet over. The British Fleet, being to the east and south of the enemy, were between him and his base, and had every hope of sighting him again next morning in a position which would give him no chance of final escape. The safety of our own battleships and battle-cruisers must be entrusted to the light cruisers and destroyers during the hours of darkness. They fulfilled their task perfectly. During an attack by the 11th Flotilla, *Castor* engaged and sank an enemy destroyer at point blank range. The 1st and 3rd Light Cruiser Squadrons 'very effectively protected the head of our line from torpedo attack,' and continued spread in front of the battle-cruisers until 9.24 P.M., when Sir David Beatty 'turned to the course of the Fleet.' The 13th Flotilla took station astern of the Battle Fleet for the night. Half an hour after midnight they had a brush with a large vessel which played a searchlight on them and disabled *Turbulent* with a heavy fire. At 3.30 A.M. another destroyer, *Champion*, was engaged for a few minutes with four enemy destroyers. At 2.35 A.M. *Moresby* sighted four ships of the Deutschland class and hit one with a torpedo. The 2nd Light Cruiser Squadron was at the rear of our battle line during the night, and at 9.0 P.M. assisted in repelling a destroyer attack on the 5th Battle Squadron. They were also heavily

"CASTOR . . . SANK AN ENEMY T.B. DESTROYER AT POINT BLANK RANGE."

engaged at 10.20 P.M. with five enemy cruisers; the fighting lasted fifteen minutes and *Southampton* and *Dublin* both suffered and inflicted severe casualties. *Birmingham* sighted at 11.30 P.M. two heavy ships going south. The German High Sea Fleet was evidently crumpled up, and making its way home in groups. They did not go scot free. At 8.40 P.M., only two minutes after their disappearance westward, all our battle-cruisers felt a heavy shock, as if they had been struck by a mine or torpedo, or possibly sunken wreckage. An examination of the hulls afterwards showed that nothing of the kind had occurred to any of them, and Sir David Beatty assumes, no doubt rightly, that the shock came from the blowing up of a great vessel.

Nor was this the only disaster the night brought to the enemy. 'We continued,' says P, 'to chase the Huns throughout the night, and saw a good deal of firing going on, which was probably when the destroyers sank a battleship. . . . I didn't get any sleep on Wednesday night as we were, of course, closed up at the guns all the time.' 'Oh! that night!' says M. 'We couldn't tell what was happening: every now and then out of the darkness would come bang! bang! boom! as hard as it could go for ten minutes on end. The flash of the guns lights up the whole sky for miles and the noise is much more penetrating than by day. Then you would see a great burst of flame from some poor devil, and then a searchlight switched on and off again, and then perfect silence once more.' 'All night long,' says Q, 'our cruisers fought them, and it was a wonderful sight. Every other second there were vivid flashes lighting up the sky like lightning, and there was a continuous roar of big guns. Once a ship caught on fire,

and it lit up the whole place like day for five minutes. The flames must have been nearly 300 feet high.' This was as seen from the *Colossus:* apparently the *Vanguard* was nearer and had a better view of the same spectacle. 'At 10.40 P.M.,' says R, 'when at night action stations (I was at my searchlights, of course), a destroyer was discovered attempting a night attack on us. Switching on searchlights, we opened a terrific fire on her with lyddite. Up went a great crimson glow from her, lighting up the sky as each projectile hit her. Finally, after about one minute she blew up, and I was treated to the most gloriously ghastly sight it has ever been my lot to see.'

It is difficult to imagine anything more trying to the nerves than such a night after such a day. 'The night was an anxious time,' L says. 'There were only a few hours of actual darkness, but it was as black as your hat, and our hopes of cutting off the Germans were doomed to disappointment. As it was, the way they got off in the night was the cleverest thing they did. . . . It was light very early on Thursday, but nothing more was seen of the Germans. There were many signs, however, of the previous day's work.'

When it was light enough for the Battle Fleet to move, Sir John Jellicoe, being then to the south and west of the Horn Reef, proceeded to traverse the field of battle to collect his cruisers and destroyers and to locate the enemy. Sir Cecil Burney had already, at 2.30 A.M., shifted his flag into the *Revenge*, and the *Marlborough* now went home to get her torpedo sting taken out. On the way she successfully defeated a submarine attack. *Warspite* also went home under her own steam: in fact S says that 'When she returned

to dock her escort had to travel at full speed to keep up with her even in her damaged condition.'

At 9.0 A.M. the destroyers rejoined after their brilliant night's work. The British Fleet remained in the proximity of the battlefield and near the line of approach to German ports until 11.0 A.M. on June 1. The enemy, however, made no sign. A Zeppelin was seen and engaged for about five minutes, 'during which time,' says Sir John Jellicoe, 'she had ample opportunity to note and subsequently report the position and course of the British Fleet.' But what remained of the High Sea Fleet was thankfully going into dock; it had no intention of bidding seriously for the command of the sea.

7. Losses and Gains

The Germans were in all respects heavy losers in the Battle of Jutland. They did not attempt to gain the command of the sea, or to raise our blockade; but the Kaiser did attempt to deceive his people into the belief that these were his objects and that they had been achieved. Probably that belief is not now very widespread in Germany. The real attempt of the High Sea Fleet was to weaken our relative naval strength by inflicting disproportionate losses upon us. In this too they failed disastrously. Having achieved neither their pretended nor their real object, they are now in a much worse position than before the action. The situation has been well summed up by the distinguished Japanese Admiral Akiyama, who prepared the plans for the decisive battle of Tsushima:—

'Even when I saw the first announcement of the battle, I was convinced that it meant only one thing—

a British victory; but on studying Admiral Jellicoe's despatch I find that the Battle of Jutland was the most brilliant victory and the greatest success ever achieved by the British Fleet, though it must be said that the Germans fought very well and put forward their utmost effort. The reasons for my view are :—

'(1) The superior force of the British Fleet was very well concentrated on the battlefield from its distant bases. This is a most difficult operation in naval warfare, and constituted Admiral Jellicoe's first strategic gain in the battle.

'(2) Neither on the battlefield as a whole, nor in any part of it, was there any strategical or tactical mistake committed by the British Commander-in-Chief or any of his subordinate commanders.

'(3) The British Fleet remained master of the battlefield and has maintained the effective control of the sea.

'(4) The German losses are much heavier than the British. It is a common thing in discussing a battle to see which side had the heavier loss; but this loss is not the principal element of the result of war, and the victor may often lose more than the vanquished. Anyhow I am sure that the German losses are much greater than those reported by Admiral Jellicoe.

'I firmly believe that the German Fleet cannot again take the sea, for their loss in battle-cruisers and light cruisers is so great that it is impossible for them to employ their Dreadnoughts and other capital ships that need the support of smaller vessels of great speed.'

This is the opinion of an expert. It is not of course a final verdict, for the material for criticism of tactics is not yet complete, but as to the losses the figures

amply bear out Admiral Akiyama's statement. The loss inflicted on the British Fleet was a loss of fourteen ships—three battle-cruisers, three armoured cruisers, and eight destroyers. The total tonnage of these was 113,300, and the number of officers and men was 5670, of whom the *Warrior's* (704) and other crews gave back a large number, leaving a final loss of not more than 5000. This total of loss, though regrettable, was in itself but a small diminution of the fighting power of our Fleet; to achieve it, the Germans had to sacrifice an actually larger, and a relatively very much larger, part of their force. Their ascertained loss amounted to seventeen ships—two Dreadnought battleships and one battleship of the smaller Deutschland class; two battle-cruisers, the *Hindenburg* and *Lützow*, five other cruisers, six destroyers, and one submarine. The total tonnage of these was about 146,000, and the number of officers and men about 5600, of whom some were no doubt saved—a German statement has admitted a loss of 4600.

This comparison is, on the face of it, heavily in our favour; but it is far from representing the result on the relative strength of the two navies. Of the ships engaged but not sunk, none on our side suffered any severe injury, except the *Marlborough* and the *Lion*, though repairs would be necessary to the other battle-cruisers, to some of the ships of the 5th Battle Squadron, and to three of the light cruisers. The main Battle Fleet suffered a loss of only three men in all, and was reported ready again for action at 9.30 P.M. on June 2nd. The state of the German High Sea Fleet was 'very otherwise.' Before it left us, it was a badly beaten fleet. Battleships and battle-cruisers were repeatedly

seen on fire, or limping away disabled and with their guns silenced. Information of the most circumstantial kind has reached Holland that the ships docked for repair included five large battleships, *König*, *Kaiser*, *Kaiserin*, *Markgraf* and *Grosser Kürfürst;* two smaller battleships, *Rheinland* and *Hessen;* four battle-cruisers, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, *Von der Tann* and *Derfflinger;* and four light cruisers, *Regensburg*, *Stettin*, *Köln* and *Frankfurt*. Of these, the four battle-cruisers all had their superstructures destroyed, with most of their big guns, and *Seydlitz* was practically a wreck, having had her stern shot to pieces. For a fresh battle during the month of June, Sir John Jellicoe could have brought into action a fleet the exact equivalent of his original fleet, minus only four battle-cruisers. The Kaiser could have sent out fourteen battleships instead of twenty-two, no battle-cruisers, two armoured cruisers and perhaps, if he stripped the Baltic, ten light cruisers—a force which could with absolute certainty be destroyed by two squadrons of our Battle Fleet and their light cruisers. The German Navy, which on May 30th ranked second among the navies of the world, on May 31 sank to the fifth place, leaving ours in a greater superiority than before. They will mend their ships, no doubt; but by that time our fleet will have increased, and theirs will not.

A deadlier loss still is the doubt cast upon the efficiency of their gunnery. Its failure as described by our officers seems to have been due to the worst of all causes, a defect not of material but of personnel. Sir John Jellicoe reports that, in our fleet 'the control and drill remained undisturbed throughout, in many cases despite heavy damage to material and personnel.

Our superiority over the enemy in this respect was very marked, their efficiency becoming rapidly reduced under punishment, while ours was maintained throughout.' His statement is confirmed by an overwhelming mass of evidence. I have already quoted B's exactly similar view. D adds: 'The moment we started in on them, their shooting became extremely wild and inaccurate. . . . This proves to me that the Huns have no real stomach for sea-fighting, for our shooting improved and was wonderfully good.' P says: 'The men were simply splendid. Everything went just as if we had been at battle practice.' E writes: 'One thing was proved in that fight—the absolute superiority of British gunnery over the Germans. Gun for gun we were absolutely superior, and I only wish they had stuck it for another hour.' S says: 'I really don't know how we got through without being hit—they can't shoot when they are up against us . . . their crews were panic-stricken. . . . We shook the German Fleet to its heart; they will never be the same fleet again.'

The figures, too, bear out these opinions. Even the Germans' earliest shooting was not as good as the sinking of our big ships seemed to indicate. Their first concentration was a complete failure. 'Every gun of the German Squadron,' says E, 'was first turned on the *Lion*, but hardly a shell hit her . . . the majority fell short, sending up terrific volumes of water.' *Warspite* had the same good fortune during her escapade. T writes sanguinely that 'the gunnery of the *Warrior's* gunners was splendid and almost every shell sent from the mouths of the twelve guns found its billet'; while, on the other hand, 'quite four salvoes of shrapnel as well as asphyxiating bombs passed over the *Warrior* before

she was vitally hit.' The *Iron Duke*, Sir John tells us, began hitting with her second salvo; the *Colossus* hit her first ship with her third salvo, and got onto her second and third ships without a miss. But the conditions of the two fleets tells the whole tale. As G says: 'The Huns couldn't keep their gunners up to scratch in an action. If so, cheer-oh! when we meet them again.'

The same officer sums up well, with a fine ring of tradition in one of his phrases. 'Beatty did the job beautifully. . . . When the Grand Fleet did come up, looming out of the thick weather in the north, a great sickness fell upon the Huns . . . they all with one accord began to make tracks for home. Our big ships fired several salvoes with good effect; but funk and the mist between them saved the Huns from sure destruction. Well, it wasn't really funk, you know; it was quite their line of strategy. Only compared with the Beatty touch, the Hun looks a bit poor. They can't help it; there it is.'

There it is—the Beatty Touch.

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